

The Contact



Number 53 • October 2004



“I have my fears . . .
but they do not have me . . .”

—Peter Gabriel

From Soulard's Notebooks

Excerpt from letter to Jim Burke III:

September 22, 2004
near 11 p.m.
Starbucks at Chivalry (P.S.)
Seattle, WA.

- A Zen book of questions I was looking at advised against thinking one's self in a given moment as lucky or unlucky - it said "be" - "Make your meal, clean your plate" - I've carried this idea along now for several days & it keeps sound in different situations - it's comfort in part that if I don't fear happiness plucked away again, think & expect it - whatever does occur will be OK -

I find myself trying to balance care & detachment - this works better in some situations than others - My job better, with Kassi not well - loved ones want immersion & of course that's what we want with them - jobs are different - many simply expect too much - anyway I suppose you're right that Eastern thought does interest me some, but mark this too: I do not any longer place human wisdom above anything else - as a race we've shown tenacity to survive but with so much blunt brutality & open

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suffering in the world, I cannot mark our "progression" with much satisfaction if human life met its sometime ideals I would not have to practice a caring/detachment balance - one I suspect many others do as well -

our leaders are fools & our wise men are impotent - our weakest members are consumed & our strongest obsess in endless competition - our artists dream sometimes excruciatingly lovely but shy from the rigors of examining human governance from its bullying, coercive tendencies - our holy men, in whatever sense this phrase is not both a fraud & a paradox, waste their years clinging to old tomes. Our women too often lose themselves in mindless service or pain-numbing, displacing erotic day dreams - & our children are rigorously brainwashed to worship gods & conformity & the largest fist & the tightest ass -

I loathe our seers talking of new apes & paradigm shifts & such bullshit as those lured by esotericism always trade in.

Where hope resides there is nature's prosperous infinitudes of growth & perseverance

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& the beguiling power of music, & the unaccountable instances of kindness among souls. Little things, peripheral things, big maze-like things.

I don't mark an easy path to better days; the hole we're inside is deep & old, & it bides only because we allow it -

I don't think losing the best & the brightest from the herd of samnambutents is the answer - all is ore, for better & worse - I don't know what would bring about authentic hopeful times again - maybe it's simply an occurrence here, & one there, ^{in a slight twist now,} ~~a slight twist~~ some piece of luck, something, then something else -

just as ^{an} individual's life raises higher & lower, boat on the sea, better meals, lighter burden of dishes to watch ^{up st,} ~~watch~~, maybe the world too

I don't know - I can't see widely & deeply enough around - for moments perhaps - then I'm moving through a crowd again - one more lusty thing body.

OK, 9-22-2001





Number 53 • October 2004

Edited by Raymond Souland Jr. @

Assistant Editor: Kassandra Kramer

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SCRIPTOR PRESS

Be A Good American

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Thank you to Gerry Dillon & Jim Burke III for making my unwilling sojourn back to Connecticut bearable. Thank you to Sean Lamont, Llyra De La Mere, & Clarica Grove for helping me return to Seattle & make it this time. Thank you to the Green Tortoise tribe at Burning Man 2004 for a fantastic trip. Thank you to Borders Bellevue for employing my often ungrateful ass. Thank you SpiritPlants.com online for helping keep me strong & hopeful. Most of all, than you to Cassandra Kramer for arriving in my life barely days after I'd given up the deepest of my wishes. I love you always.

Jim Burke III



Editor's Note: The following is the twenty-second in an ongoing series derived from the correspondence between Jim Burke III and myself, begun in 1992, and in the spirit of the more enthused letter-writing tradition of yesteryear.

MDC Reservoir
West Hartford, Connecticut
Sept 1, 2004

Dear Ray,

I know it must have been mentally and emotionally draining coming back here to move your stuff and deal with everything else at the same time (of course beside physically). I'm glad you're exploring the Eastern world. This is a whole side of art that our culture cannot begin to grasp, mostly I think because their nuances are not studied on an individual basis. I remember writing haikus in Junior English in high school. It is an art form that I have enjoyed and comes to me "naturally":

*Clouds veer in motion
driven endlessly from wind
as a timeless gift*

Pete Townshend has stated that there is not enough time in the day to do all that one wants. I have found this to be true, unless I surrender to the breath of the moment. This is one of the fundamentals of Buddhism and can be applied, I think, to Hinduism as well. God and Art and Truth are more than just intertwined, they are one and the same—on the same philosophical level. You have been writing for 30 or so years and I have been playing and singing for 30 years. We have paid our dues. I am very happy you are where you want to be. I know Ct. is not my true calling. Maybe I should have stayed on the road? I have no regrets though. I have experienced more in fifty years than most people from my background (upbringing) have in several lifetimes. My experience certainly transcends what we are taught to believe, and what we are taught that we can choose to believe. This is a point that needs to be considered, in my opinion.

The population that we live in are given a choice as to what to believe, but only with yes or no. Of course "maybe" can be applied to everyday situations, but metaphysically it is not of the question. Consider the statement "there is a Supreme Being." Since no one can answer this yes or no (because no one can define what a "Supreme Being" entails), the only logical alternative is the third possibility—**but not a maybe!** This is



where the divergence takes place. The third possibility must involve existence outside of our perceived reality. Our reality is totally individually subjective and therefore cannot exist from moment to moment for anyone other than that individual. That would be no doubt that the third alternative is the solution to all thought. Art and Truth and God would be final, unwavering and absolute.

Those of us who pursue the alternative are actually living it, so if it doesn't seem like you can continue, take heart. It is not because it has all been done before, but rather because there is so much to be done. The artist indeed lives outside the mainstream reality and contemplates mysteries not bounded by time, space, or yes and no. From grade one, people are told what they can learn, how to learn it, and what it can be applied to. I followed those lines for the first 18 years of my life. I have learned from that experience. Keep thinking beyond yes or no. This is where I am at this moment!

Peace & Love
J.B.H.



WITHIN'S WITHIN: SCENES FROM THE PSYCHEDELIC REVOLUTION

○ Music. Poetry. Rant. Mindfood.

turn on . . .

tune in . . .



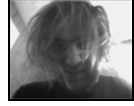
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Raymond Soulard, Jr.



6 X 36 NOCTURNES

(sixth series)

xxxi. Desire

She seeks love resembling music, cracks
of shine in wills of wonder, a velvet
recline in a pair of calm hands, what
dreams advise her by torch & rapid, lovers
eye her cheek & shoulder, not enough,
the moon mutters & she agrees: not enough.

She carries a mirror framed by red
leaves, in it her fancies glow, her
teacups glitter. Listen twice: she seeks
love resembling music, with rickety nails
& small howls. She studies how the moon
lacks hurry, wishes to praise & chew this.

In the rain she practices clarity,
shapes her singing, carves each movement
from most piercing intents, becomes a wet
girl with a goddess grin. Each day she
learns again to know nothing: she seeks
love resembling music. Revelation: spirit & sugar.

But not enough, growls the moon. Not enough.
She contrives new costumes with scraps of
color & rhythm, stains her chamber with drizzle,
with pearls, furs her feet, bombards her
hair with spangles, slivers of tortoise shell,
blackest silk, reddest lacquer. Not enough!

Now she sings it with the moon. A motto of
defiance, badge of faith. The only love
that matters is that resembling music,
the kind that gilds within, she looks
about in darkness unto dawn, smacks
down poems which less than matter,

swigs what few remain & hands off her
 slopping chalice to the moon. She
 hears me say I love you & nods.
 She'll add my shadow or two to her
 cacophonous flow. So this is submission:

Moonlight's girl bids me rise. Wishless
 desire. A tremble passing happiness.

xxxii. Whiplash

You star & elude, occupy what I lack,
 call for a harder beat, scream up
 armies of dancers, Artist woman, fist &
 tremble, wrench away then whisper
 "help me" too full of smiling to deny--

Yes. Swirl. Yes. Raise strange angles
 in my mind, slick patterns, jumping
 failures, raise them & more, point
 twice toward the mountains, explain
 nothing, go on, I'll call you a queen
 & neither of us will laugh--

Your voice slides across my dreams,
 singing thick hungers. Dance with
 my eyes closed, do, we both know
 absence contrives biggest beauty.
 Strum, hurry, hush, swing me a kiss
 powdered with sugar & empathy.

Artist woman, your doom, your mission,
 even your toys & baubles are there
 for your merciless transformations. Begin.
 Now several notes, now a crush, now a
 canyon. Continue, a beaver, an arroyo,
 a passage for counting spectres. Conclude,

but for just a moment to brush your hair,
 & calm your sciroccos. For a moment
 to taste you, call a passing conflagration
 we. For a moment you arrive &
 lay back in love's crackling nest.

Artist woman, feel my ink & my gaze braid
 among your hours. Your trailing silence
 gathering feathers of music for your work.
 Legs swishing, eyes summing, lyrics cover
 your every wish. What's to come will fatten
 my books with songs everyone will know.

xxiii. Collision

Beauty is guerilla, hurries by with a
 stinging flicker, the smack of evening
 pines blowing spells, trickles of new love
 become a bone-hard symphony ruinous
 to every recent intent.

I call you a collision, girl, a mound of
 apples & their steel teeth.

Beauty a daily bath of fire, bladed roar
 from depthless center, driving
 mockeries & harder rhythms, years flee,
 the flames pursue. You ache as the
 sunshine crawls across your cheek.

I call you a collision, child, the way
 the universe eludes blunt evocation.

A collision, late sunshine & murmuring
 prelude, leaves raving in grey, gold, &
 crimson. You, a collision, artist in
 blood's accelerating vehicle, singing to the wheels.

A collision, by the tracks, solid as
 hot bread, ambiguous as kisses within
 full moonlight. Collision, girl, now stand
 again today. Your pieces still fit. Your wide
 shimmering field lays open, yet unbreached.

Collisions come in rises, linger as stains,
 the sky at your border, weighted, sprinkling,
 lovers on your sea, choppy sails, fragments
 of stars. Collisions tell a hungry woman
 she will not always dance alone.

Now turn on the morning, guerilla come
 again in songs crowding you from dream's
 nets. Feel the curves in your mind leading
 you onward by whisper & fist. Collisions
 will break your bubble, girl, & again.

xxxiv. Liberation, Part One

No revelation, no resolution, no yes for
 every no, or final no, grey & lasting.
 The music dreams you on & on, through
 promise & pain, & again. The leaves
 come & go, maybe a limit, maybe a lesson.

No revelation, no resolution, no stronger yes
 for every strong no, or lasting no, grey
 & final.

The music dreams you on & on,
 through promise & demise, & again. The leaves
 come & go, a limit, a lesson.

Then a bend
 in the rain, a scribble, a sting, something
 new climbs from dreams & embers.

Wish it
 so, not so, sigh, sup, build a world from
 sugar & spirit. Embrace it all. Let it go.

See what remains. A whisper lingers. Nocturnal
 moan, watch a heart empty its red gold, & its
 shell depart by morning.

Watch. Hands unclasp
 & nothing matters awhile. No revelation, no
 resolution, scriptures trail into fists & fire.

No revolution plays out bluntly through
 the wires, no revelation leads to an
 easy bed & soft dreaming, no resolution
 holds tough by both sunshine & full moon.
 Yes & no each leak truth, bleed Beauty,
 & the music dreams you on & on,

past premise & promise, leaves, limits,
 lessons. Scratches at your ache, compels
 your dark something greater into the rhythm,
 presses, & again, then a bend in the rain,
 a squeal, a sting, your dark something newly
 wrought climbs from dreams & embers.

Wish it so, not so, sigh, sup, build a world
 from sugar & spit, embrace it all,
 let it go, see what remains. What
 remains. A whisper, nocturnal moan,
 residua, nothing less, watching a heart empty
 its red gold, & its shell disappear with morning.

Watch. Hands unclasp & nothing matters
 awhile. Revolution, revelation, resolution,
 words dead of power, their pages fold into fists
 & trail into fire. Liberation's sweet noise rises
 in the dark, a secret child listening closely.
 New magick yet in the crumblingest bones.

Revolution begins where ideals cross solitude,
 the weak place where soul bulges toward soul,
 something finally upon an hour burst, finishing a
 corrosion of days, knuckled words at a corner, slap,
 hustle, again, again, revolution begins when
 there are no deterrents left, leafless forests,

too many silent pilgrims along the boulevard
 by dusk, by light, revolution becomes awhile
 what hearth & window once were, what rain
 once meant, what books once cradled.

The fire now snaps with fistly compulsion,
 the drums choiceless roar, the dancers
 rawly summon stars & flicker loins' power.

Again the music dreams you openly,
 past premise & resolution, again you
 sing with words brilliant as icicles, &
 when the dark something within howls
 you bark back, ferociously, antlers, claws,
 stingers, webs.

Embrace it all. Let it go. See what remains.
 Wish it so, not so, growl, feed, wreck,
 suffer. Hunt the idea lacking, what will revive
 crushed things, whiten the lace, renew the need.
 See what remains. A whisper, residua, nocturnal
 moan. What remains. Watch again a heart empty

its red gold, its shell disappear by morning, &
 again hands unclasp, & again nothing matters
 awhile. Watch. What remains? Dead of power,
 corrosion of days, knuckled words, slap,
 hustle, the hour bursts, the world blurs,
 anything means everything, again,

revolution begins, roaring green power
 out of soul & soil, sky variously lit
 for countless revelations, again you flare
 with remembrance & renewal, again the shriek
 for abyss bursts wide into murmuring possibilities.

Liberation falls by daylight, dirty, comical,
 without muscle or engine, falls with its leaves
 of promise, its loving skies so near, falls
 among the dappled sheets & street hackings,
 disfigured candles, renewed presence of scars
 & soot, falls by diminishing strum, miscarried want.

What carries through accelerating light an
 echo, a silent pilgrim nodding by a willow,
 an echo, dark something within pacing about
 sparks of merry, an echo, an ember,
 an obscured text of sweet noise. Dreaming
 crosses mapless shadows, stubborn's tough quest.

Near again, the night murmurs in traffic,
 jingling the fog, imagines tapping fingers
 to conjure, cool eyes to make. A dribble,
 then a pool. Now the folds of its dress
 induce, now they summon, now they wrap,
 now consume. A thrum, a movement.

Liberation. Liken to a key ringing against
 stone, to a burst of red gold through a
 soul's open blossom, a strange incandescence,
 new each time it comes, liberation, chew
 its nipple, caress its strings. Glowing gravel
 in its billowing rise, its threat & its fragile
 dance wars ever fought, love's every blade, death's every song.

Liberation stretches by music's freakish
 dreaming, yowl, shudder, fists blossom,
 crowds spread toward chanting, preachers
 chase to follow, into mountains of forest,
 through oceans of leaf, sweet noise rising in
 the dusk, power roaring from soul & soil,

& let a dark something into the rhythm,
 let dancers & kings trade blades over
 which bright world will be, let what
 can be burned, burn, see what remains,
 turn awhile from the path pilgrims ever
 walk, let something called revolution

play out bluntly through the wires, let red
 gold spill & true magick scatter, huddle
 within depths watching passing glares
 spatter the walls, books & radio dormant,
 tonight's bedchamber dully safe. The music
 dreams you on & on, freaks dressed

in tatters & care. On & on, no revelation,
 no resolution. The music dreams you
 on & on, leaves come & go. No limit. No lesson.

xxxv. *Liberation, Part Two*

"How the heart approaches what it yearns. . . "
 --Paul Simon

The world ever opens out like an
 offering hand, like morning tossed out
 from dreaming, like a tree dazzled in
 moonlight, like the careening noise &
 silence of a keeping dance.

Liberation surrenders to suffering & stillness.
 Liberation submits to love's tossings, the whiplash
 of internal starfire.

Not at peace, dance harder, eat every beat
 deeper, feel the world open out in gunfire
 & poverty. Feel the war crossing nearby
 streets, & peace hustle & snicker right
 after, & music lay across every night like a golden bomb.

Liberation is soul twined, mournful but still
 moving. Slave to nothing: say it again. You are
 a slave to nothing.

Suffer. Suffer. Then let something bright
 & unbidden in, let it knock about your
 walls, noisy with strange rhythms, cries
 & confessions. Suffer. Then let others in &
 watch them continue building your world while you writhe.

Liberation watch it flow away & have
 to follow. Love her from afar. Love them
 all from afar. Learn again how to near.

Slave to nothing: say it again. You are
 a slave to nothing. Suffering. Say yes.
 Say it again. It mounts valleys & years.
 Say yes. Then something else. A new
 hour.

Wings, shadows, a turn. How to live alongside
 blade, submission, & passing clouds. The world
 ever opens out like an offering hand. Accept.

To be continued in *Cenacle* | 55 | April 2005



“Ravenna Park” by RS/KDK

Raymond Soulard, Jr.



New Period

(continued)

"When a man starts to learn, he is never clear about his objectives. His purpose is faulty; his intent is vague. He hopes for rewards that will never materialize, for he knows nothing of the hardships of learning.

"He slowly begins to learn—bit by bit at first, then in big chunks. And his thoughts soon clash. What he learns is never what he pictured, or imagined, and so he begins to be afraid. Learning is never what one expects. Every step of learning is a new task, and the fear the man is experiencing begins to mount mercilessly, unyieldingly. His purpose becomes a battlefield.

"And thus he has stumbled upon the first of his natural enemies: Fear! A terrible enemy—treacherous, and difficult to overcome. It remains concealed at every turn of the way, prowling, waiting. And if the man, terrified in its presence, runs away, his enemy will have put an end to his quest."

—Carlos Castaneda,
*The Teachings of Don Juan:
A Yaqui Way of Knowledge,*
1968.

Secret Joy Amongst These Times. Secret Joy, Within's Within. Known & Speckled Spectral Thing.

Oooo yah. Hmm. Yes.

Fall back. Calm. Reinvent. Smile. & Reinvent. & Reinvent. Begin, incandescence.

ooooyahmmyes.

There is a secret joy amongst these times, a within's within, a known & speckled spectral thing, an exploding blare & swoop from between our dreams, a series of coded midnight shadows, glyphs taut with our best laughter, all cosmos, we are all cosmos, all cosmos, without & within, we are all, all cosmos, all careening, liquefying, we need to begin now, secret joy, within's within, begin now, trade into ecstasy, begin, trade, each's eyes for every's vision, trade, ears for song, fuck for immolation, Godd for yes, yes for mystery, mystery for silence, silence for delight, delight for evanescence, evanescence for dream, dream for ecstasy, ecstasy, ecstasy, ecstasy, ecstasy for beginning, beginning for continuance,

continuance for here, here for now for here for now here now here now
 here now here & now here & now here & now here & now & now & now
 & now & now & now.

& now.

We need to begin now, trade into ecstasy, we are beginning now.
 Always. Beginning now. Secret joy. The secret joy is always beginning now.

"Dad?"

"Yes, Rebbby?"

"Have you ever done acid?"

"No. I haven't."

"Why?"

"I don't know. Noone in the band trips. It never seemed necessary."

"Does it, um, bother you that me & Ray trip a lot? And all the college
 kids who hang around?"

"And the ones not yet in college?"

"Yah."

"No."

"Would you trip with me?"

"I don't know. I didn't plan to."

"Would you trip with me?"

"Yes. I will."

"Would Franny too?"

"I don't know. She'll have to decide that."

They sit together in Cement Park on a cold day. Wearing leather
 jacket & blue jeans & boots. She watches him, like always, with the whole
 of her being. He watches her too. He wonders at her.

"Rebbby, I keep loving you more."

"Me too, Dad."

Ciccone wonders if I trip too much while I fear I don't trip often
 enough.

I talk. Explain. Put forth Art Acid & Nature as my Three Big Songs to
 twine, so to speak. He smiles, voice of a poet, a Jersey poet, back of an
 athlete, a Jersey athlete. Calls my doings a feast of vision or somesuch.

Hereon a return to the still-folded ideas of "Blue Period," to unfold
 them, listen to their glisten.

A run of pages acid-tipped, words forming from a tab of Goddpink,
 or several. And a dedication to Ciccone who listened with patience &
 love as his ragged friend spelled out a plan we'd both agree looks like
 madness but each know isn't:

These pages coming for awhile for you, Ciccone—brother, friend,
 poet-in-blood—

When Rich wants to marry Franny again he picks her up in his arms &
 carries her around their apartment & sings bits of old Beatles songs.

This is how he marries her often, sometimes many times before
 sundown, many more times by sunrise

he wants to marry her continuously, he wants to go beyond I do to I

will to I am & somehow inside this.

His marriage exists inside I am which is capital of We.

He enters her purple eyes often, mostly when he sleeps. She grows used to this, thinks it's funny, one more thing to get used to in this conscious world of fixtionalized reality

"no that's not it"

"how do you put it then?"

"this is reality inside a fixtionalized context"

"but this is reality, where we are?"

"Yes."

"Rich, they're taping Noisy Children shows every night now"

"I don't care."

"So it's OK with you?"

"Yes. Why?"

Franny goes very pretty & blonde on him. She lavishes a smile but not on his mouth so he writhes needful a little. Her hair presses blonde into red into light.

"What, Franny?"

"Well, Dylan wants to let the kids just plug into the sound system. He says they'd get better tapes that way."

"They get in his way now, don't they?"

"Yes. But he wants to work it out."

"Franny, why didn't Rebecca take care of this?"

"She says when it comes to your music, you decide."

"Everyone thinks that."

"You don't like this?"

Rich likes being in bed with Franny in the dark. She's like water. He adjusts among her. She's like music,

"Rich, it's OK."

"What?"

"You don't know, do you?"

"No."

"All that has gotten beyond you somehow."

"Rebecca wants me to do acid with her."

"You will, I'd bet."

"She wants you, too."

Franny is silent. Still water.

"OK."

"Franny?"

"Yes?"

"There's a lot here that's sprawled & messy. He wants me to take over for awhile & get thing back in order somehow."

"Psychedelic order, right?"

"Yes."

"Can you do this?"

He smiles. "Yes, I can. But he won't be able to control it or make it what he likes."

"You're not goddamned Rebecca, are you?"

"What's that mean?"

"Rich, he doesn't want you to do his will! He wants you to come back to make things bigger & more alive like they used to be."

"I'm just a musician, maw."

"What about your musical?"

"It can't be like it was. Too much has happened. It has to be live. Not a script with a set. It has to invent itself as it goes along."

"In the Ampitheatre?"

"Yes. And we have to bring the Cornish Phalanx into it. And David Time. And 1968. We have to move in time & space while standing there playing."

"You've done that. You guys do that all the time."

"It's more. Soulard!"

"I'm here."

"Are you going to listen to me if I talk for awhile?"

"Yes. Please."

"You hoped to wiggle back into more conventional writing for awhile, didn't you?"

"Yes."

"But you're tripping now as you write this, listening to Led Zeppelin in Harvard Square"

"Yes"

"Do you want to go back to all that?"

"No. But I do like story. I mean, I find lately I trip & write about writing instead of telling a story that reflects the psychedelic spaces I'm moving in more & more"

"Do you want to go back?"

"No! I can't. We can't."

"No."

"Rich, it's about we. That's what I want to get back to. I love you & Franny & Rebecca & Luna T's & all the people who go there. The Ampitheatre is like a realization of these stories' potential."

"But you don't want to make the experience about you alone."

"No. You're all characters I care about. I have to keep writing about you."

"Noisy Children is ongoing now?"

"Yes. Always."

"But how do you address the yearnings of Stephanie to make records & tour? These are individuals. They're part of a band that has made records & done hundreds of shows without ever figuring out what it was going to do next."

"Yes."

"You need me to figure this all out."

"Yes. They'll listen to you. I'm not the band's leader."

"OK."

"You'll figure it out?"

"Yes. You just write."

"Gladly."

Band meeting. Band room off-limits to everyone else. Beers all around.

Americus: I think our realization as a band of musicians and a family will be in staying here in Luna T's Cafe & working up toward the musical I've been messing with for awhile.

Stephanie: No more tours? Do we make records?

Americus: We can if you guys want. But they'll be live, strictly live. No more studios.

Stephanie: Do you need me?

Gretta: We all need you, Steph. You know that.

Stephanie: I want to hear him say it. Rich, do you need me or a woman or a keyboardist or noone at all really?

Rich: I need you, Stephanie. I need you to play with me in our band & help me figure out how we're going to do all this right.

Stephanie: No shit?

Rich: None. We're family. We've always been family. That never ends. We need to make this music together & find a way to love each other & know each other.

Stephanie: I'm in. Period.

Rich: Good.

Stephanie: You won't always want to say that. I'm not a hippie. There will be records & I'll see to it personally that this place doesn't go under.

Ronnie Pascale: Do we have to act?

Rich: What?

Ronnie: No, I mean I'd like to.

Rich: You do?

Ronnie: Yes. I mean if you do the music with us & maybe Ray writes up the story we could really have something.

Rich: Like the Who's *Lifhouse*?

Ronnie: Yes. Make it real. We can.

Rich: Would you do acid if it came to that?

Ronnie: Yes. I'll have my music no matter what but if we have to experiment to get to the sounds we need, I'm in.

Rich: And you guys?

Cecile: You trying to make me into a bloody hippie?

Rich: Yes. It's my fucking wet dream to end all wet dreams to make you into a bloody hippie. Kent State bloody if necessary. Are you in?

Cecile: Sure, mate. Don't get yr bollocks crossed.

Rich: And you, Stephanie?

Stephanie: I told you. I'm in.

Rich: Gretta?

Gretta: Do you have to ask?

Rich: Yes

Gretta: I'm in but I'll have a condition later.

Cecile: I bet you will.

Rich: Shut up Brit! What is it?

Gretta: Do I have to say now?

Rich: Yes. We're family. No secrets.

Gretta: You'll have to marry me.

Cecile: What? He's ringed up with Schoolgirl. Or, em, Mrs. Schoolgirl!!

Stephanie: What are you talking about? Gretta, come on.

Gretta: I'm a musician & I'm good & I like how all this is going but I'm disappointed & that eats at me & makes me unhappy. I want you to marry me.

Rich: I married Franny. She's my wife. She's my Eurydice.

Gretta: I'll stay while you figure it out. And you have to marry Stephanie too.

Cecile: What? How come he gets all of you? I want some if the market's so bountiful!

Stephanie: Gretta, what are you getting at?

Gretta: We're family but that's because we're making such a big thing about our closeness. I want the talk to be real. I want us to be married, permanently. All 5 of us.

Cecile: I'm not wearing white for anyone!

Stephanie: Gretta, when did you get so radical?

Gretta: He wants us all to do acid together, to live inside a home of music together, from now on, for good. We have to make it official. So noone goes in lightly or tries to run away just because it gets weird.

Rich: Knickerbocker can marry us.

Cecile: Marry us? Are you nuts?

Stephanie: How far do we go with this?

Rich & Franny in bed. Franny nude, draped over him, listening to his breathing & heartbeat. Listening to her own, too, & how their beats are at different rates but their breathing has become synchronized. Learning, she, how to be his wife by studying similarities & differences like these. He's much more full realized than her as a person but is not trying to define her so much as urge her toward her own definition. So she's started with breathing & heartbeats, to marry him ever deeper, but also to push back the silence & shadow in her own being. It's helping. She's 23 years old & perhaps finally—

"Franny"

"Yes?"

"Gretta wants Noisy Children to get married."

Franny swallows. "What does that mean?"

"She thinks we need final consummation before we play in the Ampitheatre & start getting into my David Time musical."

Franny smiles. Resists the desire to roll onto his chest & straddle him.

"Should I be jealous?"

"I don't think so. They know you're my wife."

"Does Cecile still call me Schoolgirl?"

"It's Mrs. Schoolgirl now."

Franny laughs.

Rich sits up & Franny knows to fold into his lap. She thinks: I am your wife. Only we can do this particular thing. This love in this dark room right now is ours.

She rests against his chest. He holds her fiercely. He is remembering how lost they were to each other. She knows what to do. Gently takes his hands in hers.

holds them for a long time.

presses harder against his chest. then presses his right hand to her heart. He softens.

She's right here. It's alright because she's right here, this is her heartbeat beneath her soft breast, feel the glowing silk of her blonde hair, her legs curled up, she's feeling safe, but she is protecting too, she has something in this world to protect, a family, part of a larger tribe she is just beginning to—

"I want to be at the ceremony," she says.

"Good."

"I'm not Yoko, Rich. They can call me Schoolgirl, but I'm not Yoko."

"I know."

"Do they?"

"If they're smart."

Purple eyes flashing, "No. I want more than that. My family right now is you & Rebecca but it's all of them too. You must let me say something at the ceremony. It's important."

"OK."

Good. Happy now, Franny sprinkles across his skin, singing, softly singing, love the sugar of devotion & the spice of trust.

And thus deeper, and thus further, and thus here grows fatter, and thus now ripples more thickly.

To tell more. To unfold story & thus reinvent.

Go slowly.

Story, still wanting to tell story but . . . something elusive . . . the story is not static, is moving moving along with the universe, constellations . . . hereon means heretofore + mystery . . . some things are true like passing clouds, that is, for awhile . . . some are meteors, that is, true briefly & brightly . . . and some hang upon those shifting constellations and never dissipate, entropy, resurrection, endurance . . .

I dreamt last night that my father was proudly telling me that my confirmation name is Starbuck . . . What to do with this? . . . listen to my

own tenet . . . learn to steer . . .

Rebecca never fails to find some time each day to sit & talk with Mr. Bob, Luna T's barman. They have become good friends, over time, him watching her grow from tousle-haired child to visionary woman artist, her seeing how loyal he's been to her father, sturdy & loving to Rich no matter the rumbles or cries around them.

But more. Mr. Bob understands after his own fashion all Reb's talk about tribal consciousness. Weren't the ball-clubs he played for & managed like tribes? Isn't Luna T's itself one too? & Rebecca knows she can unburden her heart a little bit of the many cares she possesses regarding the welfare of her dad, Franny, & her lover Soulard. Mr. Bob does not damn her ever, indeed often points her toward the goodly light just beyond the hard truths she is avoiding.

Love, then. Tribal, these two, no doubt. & laughter, quite often.

So here they sit, in this deliciously dim lit bar, neither a boozier tho—he's given it up & she's never embraced it. She drinks milk. He drinks iced water.

"Ray treating you well these days? I don't see him around here much lately."

"He's around but not so, um, directly. He wants the story to be about all of us again. He thinks he gets in the way."

"When you're blue it's like an itch you think about all the time."

"It's not that. Not now. He's better than he was last year."

"What then?"

Rebecca sips her milk, twice. She likes it very cold, no matter the season. She wishes she could paint like milk, creamy & gentle & precise, but it's hard.

"We're onto something, Mr. Bob. We're getting nearer. Ray just wants to write it, wants to be, whatsis, positioned well, when it happens."

"`Positioned'? `It'?"

"I don't know. But he's sure. & he loves me more than ever. He tells me it's going to happen."

Mr. Bob shakes his head. Smiles. Sips his drink twice.

"I know," she says. "But it's OK. He's got his writing & he's got me."

"He's lucky."

"No. I am. I've got him & my dad & Franny & you & all of this. This is home. This place is my heart's desire."

"Isn't your middle name Dorothy?"

She laughs.

"What about this marriage I hear about? How's that fitting into the picture? Into the `it'?"

"Well, I guess it starts with me & Franny & my dad, & um, yknow."

"Drugs?"

She nods. "You try hard not to disapprove. But you do."

Mr. Bob stands up, falls away from her for a time, retrieving empty glasses, filling drink orders that were not pressing. Wipes up every inch of the long wooden bartop. Returns. Is ready.

"Rebecca, I was addicted for many years to a drug. Called alcohol.

Nearly killed me. I quit because your father helped me out when I was still a no-good bastard not worthy of help. But he saw something in me & after a long while I saw it myself."

He pauses. She's breathless & still. His statement is finally coming.

"I know what you're into is different. I see how it hasn't really harmed you at all. And it's made Ray even a little happy sometime. Of course I'd really credit your embraces with that."

"But it was acid that made me self-aware enough to realize he loved me! And to say it!"

He sits across from her again and takes her hands in his. "It's OK, missy, I'm not going to condemn you. Rich never would have saved me if you hadn't saved him."

He pauses. He looks at her, eyes to eyes, locked, tight. "I love you, Rebecca. It's not hard to. Doesn't prove that I'm wise or perceptive to do so. But it's true."

Small voice: "I love you too. You know that."

He releases her hands. "One thing I've learned in this world is you watch out for your own. I'm still here because other people believe that too. So all I'm saying is that no matter how wonderful or, eh, exotic the visions you're pursuing right now, watch out for your own. Not just your dad & Franny & that crazy Soulard. Those kids in that bandroom too."

Rebecca nods, wanting him to go on.

"That's what happened back then. The '60s. Ray's beloved period. People stopped watching out. Parents & children gave up on each other. American GIs came home to turned backs. The government forgot who it was there for.

"Don't make those mistakes." He stops. Words like 'blood' & 'bullets' & 'fire' don't leave his mouth. He loves this girl. He's said enough. He takes her half-filled glass & refills it, smiles at her in lieu of all of those words, the ones that did & the ones that didn't come out, & the wildly rustled waves between them settle down again, slowly.

Eyes watched. Hearts listened. Guitars sounded. Pens scrawled. No easy path to love. No hard one either.

Luna T's Cafe tucked into itself ever more. Energies coalesced, leaving false clues in their wake.

A bar. An experiment. Psychedelic manifestation.

Something at stake here. Maybe everything at stake here.

Rebecca watches me for anything, everything that could stroke her fear of losing me. She doesn't trust my being apart from her world, away from her.

"I don't."

"Rebecca, I love you."

"I love you. I want you with me."

"I've bespoiled you."

"No. You haven't, Ray. But I know what's right. You belong with me. &, um, all the rest. We need you."

"There are people who love me here too! I can't ignore anyone."

She is silent, which is worse.

"Rebecca, I want to marry you."

"Yes. When?"

"No doubts? No thinking about it?"

"No. My dad married Franny so she wouldn't go away. I'll marry you. And Noisy Children are going to get married, too, because Gretta wants them to."

"We'll marry inside these other things. All will be connected & all will be well."

"Yes."

"But I'll still live in my own world sometimes."

"No."

"Yes."

"Will you, um, be with girls there ever?"

"I don't know. But can I tell you what I won't do?"

"Yes. Please."

"Kristin was based on a girl who was at odds with these stories. Not my writing exactly, but my attitudes. Kristin was a version of how I wished this girl was."

"But that's true about other people! My dad used to be like you. &, um, I was based on your sister."

"But that has passed. & Kristin was lost because she was not really derived from my love but from my disappointment about my love. You & Rich have become unique from honest seeds of love. Love plus Art. You're no longer my sister. Rich is no longer me."

"Jim Reality's the same."

"Jim Reality's the best."

"Yes."

"But if I do meet a girl in this world, she won't be at odds with your world."

"What if she is? & what if you love her a lot?"

"I won't be able to love her like I want to if she doesn't like my writing. Rebecca, you have to trust me. Do you still want to be my wife?"

"Yes."

How to tell Rich Americus that he's going to be my father-in-law. He's almost 39, four years older than me. I've been writing about him for nearly 18 years. & Franny, my mother-in-law! Almost 24 tho I've only written about her for a couple of years.

& how this connects to the events of July 1968 at the Cornish Phalanx in New Hampshire.

No going back now, if ever it was possible.

It's January 7, 1999. Tonight I proposed marriage to Rebecca Dorothy Americus & she accepted. Earlier I'd been reading about L. Frank Baum & how he wrote the last few of his fourteen Oz books while very sick, bedridden, dying. He'd learned that the countless child-readers he sought to please wanted most from him new stories about the wonderful land of Oz. No money, no war, no death. Eccentricity valued most highly, love & love & love & love

& damnit aren't I tending toward this, haven't I been bound toward this place since I was reading these books around the time in 1981 when I invented Luna T's Cafe? And I was reading kin-to-Baum John Steinbeck & listening to Harry Chapin?

How obvious does it have to be. Rebecca is Dorothy, or perhaps more accurately Ozma, Princess & Ruler of Oz whom I longed to marry when I was 17, marry & become Court Scribe & live in the Emerald City, yes, that's what this is. Oz books + Steinbeck + Chapin + Salinger = young Soulard; young Soulard + real romance = maturing Soulard; maturing Soulard + loss + sticky devotion to Art = nearly-me Soulard, pre-April 1997 Soulard; pre-April 1997 Soulard + LSD = who-I-am-now-Soulard. It's so fucking simple!

"I see what you mean about when he appears in the story," says Mr. Bob.

Rebecca nods, looking at me anxiously.

"It's OK, son."

"Child is father-in-law to the man."

"What's that?"

"Wordsworth, tripping."

"It's not acid, Ray. It's you. It's who you are." Rebecca's talking now. Fear's left her. Fuck fear.

"You lost your first tribe, Ray. Your family. Shattered & scattered."

"Yes. Shattered & scattered."

"& all your stories & your poems are about home. But a happy home. That's what you want, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"Sit with us," says Mr. Bob, softly & kindly.

I join them at Luna T's Cafe, reluctantly.

Rebecca curls into me. My future wife. Jim Reality will be my best man.

Dr. Arnold T. Knickerbocker coheres briefly & spies me at the bar. Raises his stick & with it his voice.

"The path to love lies through sin. The road to Heaven is on fire always! We contrive our angel's wings from fear & loneliness! We meet the lord covered with our lives' mortal foulnesses! Our every nightly prayer bespeaks our rivening disbelief & moans our selfless anguish over having to die!"

He slams down the stick on the bar right dead upon his cup of coffee laced with whiskey. An explosion of glass & whiskey.

"We are burnt-out, Lord! As a race, as a world! We are begrimed shells. Our dreams rotten with decay. We are fallen for good now & we know it! Our every new tome of praise confesses our complete iniquity.

"We turn to thee not to save us, at last, but to destroy us as we have been too cowardly to destroy ourselves!"

"We beseech thee not for mercy nor for wrath, neither for justice nor for tempered wisdom. We beseech thee for annihilation, indifferent annihilation!"

"We beseech thee to crush us for all & for good! For all & for good!"

"Elsewise, lord, we shall have to finally rise up beyond all the stars of your universe & smite thee down! Kill you for blocking our path; holding us in our cradles when we desire not simply to walk but to fly! Not simply to fly but to create! Not simply to create but to create & destroy as is our will."

"Annihilate us, dear loving, gentle, compassionate lord before we crush thee & thy senseless, useless, perfect universe & create something fallen & better"

"Shit!" whispers Mr. Bob, going for a broom.

"Thank you so much" I say. "Thank you so much."

Rebecca & this crisis of faith, trust. Marrying her won't solve it, though I love her & will happily do it.

No. She sits before me. Kisses cling to her lips, looking at me anxiously.

"You don't trust me. I've breached yr faith."

"No. That's not it."

We're at a coffeehouse in Cambridge, in my world. A jazzy, bejangled sort of place, a variegated java groove, we sit across a tiny wooden table from each other, touching fingers, twining legs.

"I can't have this, Rebecca. Not from you. We have to find a way."

"Are you mad at me?"

"No. You feel what you feel. You've never been in love before.

Nothing could have prepared you for all this."

"No. Not really. But it's OK. I love you. I'm just, um, too sensitive, I guess."

Her features are fine. She's sweet soft stuff but strong.

I smile at her. "Keep breathing, Beckah."

"Sorry."

"You're going to be my wife."

"Yes. Right?"

"I'm going to be your husband."

She smiles at this, relaxes, likes the words, likes the way the I say them, likes that I say them.

I lean forward & kiss her, softly, & am stung with her love.

"I think I have a way."

"Yes, Ray."

"It has to do with your art."

She straightens up. I touch her cheek, her hair.

I lean forward again, my hands on her shoulders, lightly, my mouth near her left ear. "You'll create me from now on, when you need me.

You'll draw our love. You'll draw, or paint, or sketch, our love. I'll be subject to you too. To your influence. Your thoughts & feelings, Rebecca,

your imagination."

"Can I do it?"

"Why not? You've painted the Ampitheatre into existence with Goddpink. Now you'll do the same with me."

She's listening.

"It's not like control exactly but you will affect me. I'll be subject to your influence in a broader, deeper way."

"Are you sure about this?"

"I'm sure I love you. I'm sure we're going to marry. I'm sure I need you unimaginably but you can't fully see that right now. But you will. You'll feel me better when you paint or draw me. You'll see what you can affect & what you can't. You'll experience what I do when I write about you & the others. You'll understand better."

Rebecca kisses me, tongue-deep, hard, almost furiously. Doubt has riven her for awhile, longer than I know. It will unclasp her slowly, hurtfully.

"You're the best" she blows in my ear while squeezing one of my knees between hers.

Later, her clothes slip easily from her. I am sitting up in our bed & she is in my lap, a cover around her. I rock her. Her dark brown hair scrolls around her breast.

"You make me feel weightless" she says to dot brightly a flowing silence.

Without disturbing her I reach for a joint sitting on her bedstand. Light it up, drag, then she takes it. We need to relax a little. The wife-to-be & me.

Meanwhile, Rich Americus & Franny Salinger-Americus are at Luna T's bar, talking. Mr. Bob hanging around them, a cat near his rare treat.

"Chuck, Rich here thinks we can turn the world on"

"He's one who thinks big, missus"

"It's Rebecca, really. Somehow that's what it's become."

"What do you mean? Rich?"

He adjusts on his seat. Mr. Bob & Franny lean close to him, conspiracy, protection, love.

"I always knew she was the secret of all this. I always knew that somehow. I gave her a little something back then but look where she is now."

"But it's your band still."

"Yes, but she's convinced me of something. After all these years she's convinced me."

"What?"

"That there's a chance. For us all."

Franny grasps Mr. Bob's forearm that rests on the bartop. "Chuck, if I get lonely or this man just plain deserts me somewhere in his mind will you take care of me?"

"I don't think you need to worry, Missus."

"You're part of it too, Franny," Rich says, suddenly cohered, soft

auburn eyes entangling her.

"Me? Lil' ol' Georga' girl? Sheyut, honey, I's jes' here cuz you all like the sound of mah bare feet in yaw kich'n."

Rich frowns.

"I'm kidding. Honestly, I don't know what you're talking about. You've got your band here. I see you writing your musical. And your daughter is very happy. And so am I, ya dope."

Rich fractures into smiles now.

"I guess what we're going into makes me uptight sometimes."

"Why?"

"Because I'm almost 39 years old & my band is in their 40s but Rebecca wants us to be here now. She won't let us drift off some."

"No. How could she? She needs you a lot."

"I know. That's what I was saying. It's like she believes that we all didn't blow the promised land."

"You believe that too?"

"I believe it the best I can, Franny. Yknow—" but he stops.

"What?"

His face swims, softens, looks, briefly, old. "Franny it took most of what I had left to get you back. I didn't think I was going to do it."

Her purple eyes smoke the air around him with love. She says nothing.

"And now this musical. It's probably all I have left."

Franny's arms are around him. He gets this way once in awhile. She's still learning that what he needs is not words but tightness, embrace, hands. She kisses him hard on the cheeks. She even sings a little, recalling that this helps if she can bring herself to it.

*"I'm learning to fly
but I ain't got wings
coming down is the hardest thing
I'm learning to fly
around the clouds
but what goes up
must come down
I'm learning to fly"*

now they're singing together, now it's OK, again, & going to get better, too, good times straight away—

Noisy Children starts playing on Friday & Saturday nights again. They all love it. As much as they know they're all into something bigger soon, being back on stage together in the, what?, old fashioned way is a delight, & a relief.

"Musicians like to play," Americus tells me one night. "Even the sound checks. Fucking around. Smoking a joint, now or later. We like to play. You & Rebecca will help us put all this on a broader canvas eventually but til then we want to play & drink & smoke joints & laugh. Franny tells me I don't laugh enough."

"Don't get old on me, Americus."

"I'll try. But to do that you've got to let me lay with my band. It's what makes me happy."

"OK. Put up the posters. Play! It's your place!"

"Don't be a pussy."

"I'm not. Look, I want this story to be great & that means sooner or later you do something & I write about it & hopefully it's what it has to be."

"OK."

"I'm marrying Rebecca, by the way."

"I'm not surprised."

"Do you approve?"

"I've never trusted you. You know that. But I trust Rebecca. If she wants to marry you, that's fine. She'll make something of you."

"Yes."

"No—listen, Soulard. She's the key to all this. Not you & not me. Not even Franny, at least right now. It's Rebecca. Your fiancée."

"Right. Thanks. Pops."

"Fuck off."

So Rebecca & I sit together & are now pretty high.

"You're the key."

"What?"

"You're the key. That's what your dad says."

"The key to what, Ray?"

"I don't know really. To all this. He thinks you & I are going to figure out what has to happen."

She squirms. Her body tightens in my arms.

"Sorry, Beck."

"It's OK."

"I love you. I think about marrying you, even when I'm back there, in that world, & it makes me happy. Nobody can take it from me there."

"Why would they?" She's curious, softening again.

"I don't know. But thinking about it makes me happy."

She curls more tightly against me.

"Rebecca?"

"Yes, Ray?"

"Is it—is it possible that I still don't know you?"

She doesn't stiffen this time because I am stroking her arm, very lightly, firebombing her skin with molecules of love, slowly.

Silence gives way to: "What haven't I told you? I mean, aren't you my biographer, sort of?"

"There is one thing."

She tenses but goodly, curious, almost eager.

"What is it?"

"I don't know your future."

She slaps me lightly a couple times, laughing. "My future is being your wife."

"That's it?"

Eyes rolling, still merry: "And all that involves!"

"Oh."

"That's not your answer?" Quieter now, more serious.

"No. Americus said you're the Key. I think he's right. You are. But what does that mean?"

She looks up at me, aglow with love, and touches my cheek softly. "I don't know, Ray." Pulls my face nearer to kiss me. "My art isn't like yours." Releases me so we can regard each other. "I express myself, my life through my art. You're different."

"How?"

"You're trying to use your Art to invent yourself. A happy self that you want to be."

She smiles, teenage Jesus Buddhagirl. "That's why you're marrying me." Pauses again, one of her hands stroking my crotch. "And I know this. And it's why I'm the key. It's so simple. So easy." Her stroking hand pats me down there once, twice, & retreats. Her face tucks gently into itself. She's sleeping.

I'm left with the truth. Holding it, loving it, knowing it. Responsible for it. Going to marry it so it never goes away from me.

Rebecca.

My wife-to-be.

I want her to be most comfortable so I lay her out on our bed, make sure she is tucked under covers warmly. Wishing I could blanket her like starshine. Reluctantly I begin to back away, to sit by the window & write.

A sleeping hand pulls me back. A sleeping hand snaps & I disintegrate. A sleeping hand takes me inside where a young heart shines over a velvety landscape, where the the air jingles as one floats through it, as I float through it, me alone, for I don't think anyone has been here before.

I feel ragged & unkempt until the eventual smell of rose petals lets me understand I am naked too.

Secret joy amongst these times. Within's within.

Rebecca as landscape. For awhile starshine, I, but now nude & more usual. I don't know what to do. I hope her voice will tell me, rising out of the soft ground, an explaining vision gestating from between ripples of air. Something.

No. This is Rebecca. Her very spiritus.

Suddenly, I speak aloud. Softly, calmly, through I watch my words fill the skies with blue & red wings, swell into mountains & streams hither & yon, become watching eyes, antennae, fur, teeth

"Rebecca, I am blessed to have dreams wherein I can fly. I mean leap from the ground & go! I've gotten better at flying over the years. It's natural for me, more than walking or swimming. But it's natural because it's wonderful & precious not because I'm used to it. I never am. It's firm & it's mysterious. Both. Somehow.

"I love you like I love flying in dreams. You're miracle & mystery but you're also familiar. Your familiarity is delightful. You're my Art. You're my life."

I pull myself back into Rebecca's room, under the covers, embraced hard by her who did not want to let me leave her. She kisses me so hard I

think she's going to gnaw my face off to get it back inside her.

"Don't leave me ever please."

This ragged sheaf of papers hardly yet begun

Yah. Sweet night tonight. A young woman sings "Only kindness matters" & I can't deny it, can't fight it or intellectualize it away.

Only Kindness Matters.

OK. It's where to begin, I guess. Only Kindness Matters. OK.

To dive back into these past waters, to trust & to dive

I can do it

I'm needed

Only Kindness matters

Alright

When it began to coalesce & where I skimmed over some.

Here I go.

To begin here is to return to earlier pages, months ago, & determine where the telling went awry.

There was something I wrote about in the last pages of "Blue Period" called a "membrane" or "the membrane," really, which at the time I believed to be death in some form. Ultimately believed it to be death, that is, for earlier I'd thought it had to do with a break through the illusion of linear time & differentiated space. I rejected this idea as premonitions of my own death increased in number & scope. It was death, I'd come to believe, & to protect David Time's world in 1968 Cornish, New Hampshire, & Rich Americus's world in 1998 Hartford, Connecticut, I compelled David Time to close this membrane that we had opened up, allowing us communication with each other. I ended "Blue Period," & 17 years of Cement Park stories not much over a page later. I told Rebecca Americus the story was a failed one—and I was right in this for it did not come out to be 300 pages long as I'd planned, & I'd completely fouled up my conception of the membrane which was the story's point.

I failed in other respects as well. I didn't complete the narration of Rich's quest to retrieve Franny from the dead—I cut it off short recounting their return to Luna T's & marriage.

I never finished the tale of David Time's experiment at the Cornish Phalanx in 1968. Nor did I really do Suzann Valentine's story justice.

The story floundered not too far from shore, broke up, sank. Modelled, at least in part on Kafka's The Castle, "Blue Period" remains, until now, an unfinished story. Back in the summer of 1998, August 8, about two weeks after "BP" cracked up, I died in Glover, Vermont. None need believe me when I say this but all protests shall be given a simple, hard "fuck-off" in reply. Each of us dies at least one death, some of us more than one, a few of us more than one in the same lifetime. I mean "fuck off" with love, affection, respect, concern, but I do indeed mean "fuck off" to nay-sayers.

So it's to the ending pages of "Blue Period" that this present story needs now return. This story must bring that story to shore as neither can make it alone.

I see through David Time's eyes a clearing surrounded by thick woods near the Cornish Phalanx 1968 see through Ray Soulard Jr.'s eyes the packed bandroom of Luna T's Cafe Noisy Children on stage hurling fireballs of music at the crowd.

"Time!" I yell with his mouth. "We're through the membrane! We're both in Cornish 1968 & Hartford 1998!"

"More than that. We've commingled. Same mouth, same body."

"What do we do?"

"Do we restore the membrane?"

"No."

"That's not how it has to be this time"

I agree with I that we will allow the two places to commingle as Time & Soulard have, even as he & I agree to loose each other. It still feels like staring at one's reflection in the mirror & seeing the other's face. Worse than that.

"Nobody else notices."

"We're holding them back. We can do that for now."

Noisy Children, as Soulard/Time see them, are rocking hard at one end of the open field, in a bowl of sorts, hills around them on three sides.

"Amphitheatre."

Down the other end of the open field, the Phalanx buildings are visible. Time's friends Hartlee, Cohn, Creamy Sue, & Rachel-Nicole are dancing nude, holding hands, in a circle.

Now what?

I look at Time. "Rebecca is the key. That's what I've learned."

We/I bring Rebecca over to us, enable her consciousness to perceive the full truth of this infinite point in infinity.

She separates us full, first thing. It's OK; everything holds.

David smiles. "Yes. That's right."

Rebecca looks up at me.

"You're the key. David & I did this much. We need you now."

Rebecca leans into me heavily. I embrace her lightly. Wife-to-be. Key. She says nothing. Nothing new happens. No time passes.

She stands back. "OK," she announces.

"Why can't we watch the Bruins' game?"

"Yah, I got money on it!"

"This used to be a good bar. Now it's a drug joint."

Mr. Bob stares down his clientele. "Come or go, gentlemen. You decide."

"Why can't you put sports on TV?"

"Hell, I'd settle for the impeachment hearings!"

"We don't like this crazy stuff about infinity. We want regular programs!"

"Like 'Cops'!"

"And hockey!"

"Yah, & something with decent tits for once!"

"And hockey!"

"How about ESPN!"

"CNN!"

"MTV!"

"VH1!"

"Even Bravo?" Mr. Bob asks.

The joint shudders with disgust.

Mr. Bob grimaces & turns back to the TV.

Rebecca's looking at me. "I'm going to do this & then it will be done."

I wait, unknowing.

She says, "My dad & Franny married July 26, 1998, 30 years after his brother Mickey died. He brought Franny back from the dead."

She looks at her dad who's singing "Love Reign O'er Me" & she sez "You followed Mickey over the edge of that hayloft & spent 30 years trying to find him. You brought him back. Or at least the love you saved for him. So now you have Franny."

She's limp against me now. "It's why he can let me marry you, Ray. I don't have to hold Mickey's place anymore. He's got Franny. Not equality but, um—"

"Equivalence," I say. My bride in my arms.

"But that doesn't solve it," I add. "Because those two days fell into each other & a lot of things happened. I couldn't tell it in 'Blue Period.' I wasn't ready. I didn't know how. I don't even know if I do now."

"You do," whispers Rebecca. Humming love to me.

"It was a confluence of things. I keep trying to begin the telling. It's very hard."

Rebecca steps back to look up at me. Shorter than me by nearly a foot. Younger than me by nearly 17 years. Her face young & beautiful, eyes a deep bright blue. I have never been quite alone since she & I first kissed.

"Should I call Godd the little pink bear? I can if you want me to, Ray."

"No. We don't need to. I mean, you painted this Ampitheatre we're in with Goddpink. It's all here for us. Everything we need."

"What do we do then?"

David Time is returned to his friends, no longer aware of me or Rebecca or the Ampitheatre. Noisy Children are playing joyfully, celebrating Rich & Franny's wedding. In another corner of the field Suzann Valentine lies nude in her studio apartment bed, sipping a tumbler of orange juice laced with 10 hits of LSD, maybe more. Eyes closed, ready.

Rebecca's still with me. We sit in the grass, settling in the middle of all these summoned realities.

"I need your help, Reb."

"OK. Anything."

I summon up & hand her an artpad & a box of sharpened pencils.

"Draw me. Watch what I do. Help me when I flail. Draw into my weakness & strengthen me. Like I was telling you before: you can influence me, you can lock yourself into me & affect me some. Can you do this?"

She nods. Little conviction. This is excruciating for her.

"You're wondering what happens if you stumble?"

Nods.

Look up to the top of the hill. A large benign figure is tuning his guitar, getting ready. Jim Reality III blue-eyed mystic guitarist brother-friend.

"Listen to him," I say. "He won't let you fall. He'll support you supporting me."

"Um, what about him? What if—?"

"He's upheld by the truth. He knows the truth, Rebby. When he plays he reveals the truth. He won't go down. You can trust him."

She nods. She's 18 years old but looks about 7. She's tired. She wants to marry me & take care of me & take care of her dad & Franny & all the rest. Love, not metaphysics. Art, not mysticism.

OK.

I lay her back on the grass. I surround us with bonfire. We're now floating upon ether, upheld by will alone. Above us a fullmoon hole in the sky.

We move tightly into each other. Eyes blinking quiet lashes of notes. Mouths kissing within's within. Her long brown hair damp swirling around my neck.

Her breasts unwrapped, fill with my blood. I can't have her fearing over me anymore. Her breasts continue to fill with my blood, grow heavy & sensitive to my touch. Her dusky blue eyes close tightly & she breathes harder. I kiss her breasts softly, alternating, & she moans. I can do this. This is what's necessary. I leave my mouth on each of her nipples, on her mouth, my tongue sliding inside her ear, along the muscles of her neck. My mouth furthers its assault by spreading along the small of her back stretching to lick between her buttocks. Have covered with my lips, mouth & tongue, she.

I'm nowhere near done. My big hands take her smaller ones & we squeeze. I give her enough of my strength to create a balance between us. Then I press her hard. "Squeeze my hands! Harder! Keep me! Keep me always!" Our bones begin to give way, to fracture, but not enough to disintegrate. OK. My mouths lick suck kiss harder—but still not enough so I mount her, spread her thighs impossibly wide I become triple-cocked to fill her pussy, her ass, & her mouth.

"Squeeze my hands! Harder! Keep me! Keep me always!"

What's left of me bursts into her womb grows within her bonfire, fullmoon, bed of ether. We are lighting up, we are starburst, our hands finally are disintegrating into each other, bone, blood, muscle orgasm supernova, sunshine daydream, Rebecca & I are covered in each other, there is no way to sort us out ever again. We are covered with each other's contusions. We are I are we are I

eventually we are back in the Ampitheatre & Rebecca is in my lap kissing my cheeks & smiling, laughing.

"We're married now, aren't we, Ray?"

I nod.

"Now we'll always be together, no matter what?"

"Yes."

"Thank you."

For awhile I rock her & say nothing. She is happy. She is calm. She & I are undifferentiated. Now we can work on the rest of the universe.

Rebecca doesn't want the ether floor beneath us displaced, nor the bonfire walls around us, nor the fullmoon hole above us. She consents to sliding slowly, deliciously, off my lap, settling, jitteringly, between my legs with her artpad & pencils.

"You have to talk to me while I draw you."

"I do?"

"Yes. It will help me. OK?"

"So I begin talking to Rebecca even as I am writing the whole of this scene on paper. I am more shaken by all of this than I'd supposed. I have to be good enough for this, Rebecca. There's no other reason to write like this than it's the only way one can. It being the only way, it has to be done without hesitation or safety net. Doubt & fear have to be set on fire with the kindling soul provides. Doubt, immolate, write onward."

Rebecca is working from a basic design of a crown. A simple crown with six points. The crown shifts perspective on the page slightly, perhaps blessed with the touch of Goddpink.

"Perhaps," remarks herself. She & I have borderless skin where we touch. This is what it's like being married?

"You're not talking!" she frets.

"Why a crown?"

"Your name means king."

"Well, sort of."

"It doesn't?"

"It means 'wise protector.' In French it means king but it's spelled differently."

"Oh."

"Rebecca, there's French blood in me. But I'm no king."

But the crown isn't you exactly."

"What is it?"

"It's your art. All this. You'll see."

"So I quiet down & watch her draw. My attention is distracted by her long brown hair, soft, thick, & I find myself wanting to look at her darkblue eyes too, their deep intensity, their creating coolness, their evening sweetness, & I find myself somehow sated, but how? I find myself become part of her become part of me & as my hand moves its black pen across white page my hand sketches with pencil on artpad sheet our work, sprung from wed but still-separate roots sunk into the infinite ether below us melds us in the bonfire now smoking us without & within & somewhere above us we extend tendril branches various & eternal up toward into & through fullmoon hole beyond tick-tock & clip-clop—"

Now calmer, now renewed & reminded & reinvented I return my attention to the crown & see that it resembles the Ampitheatre & each of its points is tipped with one of the several situations under scrutiny here.

"I see" I say aloud to avoid further scoldings. "This picture is locking into my story & this space/time conundrum we are dealing with." I quiet. Wait.

"Yes" Rebecca says after a long time.

"We need to steer into the points."

"All at once?"

"I'm not sure."

Rebecca flips her pad to a new page. She takes a new pencil & dips it into a tiny vial of Goddpink.

"I need to draw many-dimensionally now," she explains. She explains no further when she pulls me into the page & now we stand, looking more like ourselves, on, in, a dab of Goddpink in the middle of an otherwise blank page.

That's the wife. Crazier than me sometimes.

She's laughing & pulling me around the page, itself a fairly flat surface, like a short-cropped lawn of grass. Except Rebecca's using the Goddpink & our motion to fill it up. I'm not sure with what.

"Rebby?"

"Yes?"

"What are we drawing?"

"You want to do this all at once, right? All these, um, situations?"

"Yes."

"Well, we're inside my art inside your art so we're getting to where nothing will stop us"

"We're not there yet?"

"No. We need Jim Reality's music."

"OK. Sure"

"It's this way. Come on!" I feel a simulacra of the Ampitheatre coalescing behind us as we begin to climb what is now a hill toward who appears to be Jim Reality at the top, playing his guitar furiously.

"Hi, Jim!" Rebecca says brightly.

Jim's eyes are closed, his face blissed out. But his music talks to us, very friendly & relaxed.

"Hi, Rebecca. Hey, Ray."

"Hey, Jim."

"Ray & I are married, Jim! Just a little while ago."

"Wow. That's great. I knew you'd find a good woman, Ray."

"Jim," I say slowly, "Do you understand that we're with you inside your music inside Rebecca's art inside my writing?"

"Of course."

I look at Rebecca. "OK, wife, what's next?" I wonder: how much of this is acid & how much is just plain me?

Rebecca settles me down near Jim & then sits between us, leaning against me a little.

"OK" sez she, smiling.

"OK" I respond.

Jim keeps playing. Penny Lane. Very strange.

Suzanne Valentine lay nude on her bed in her one-room apartment on Haight Street, or thereabouts.

Delicious & sad, she was. But deciding she would try this thing at last. If she could reach David, if only for a moment, say
 iloveyoui'msorrycomebacki'mstupidwithoutyouifellinlovewithyou&i'mnotd
 oingagoodjobwithoutyouherei'mlosingmypepperyoudamnedpoetwhatki
 ndoftalkisthat?

Pint glass of LSD-25-laced-doused-filledorangejuicevitaminC liquid
 sun mixed with liquid Godd did that make it liquid holy spirit? Ha ha. Your
 kind wilt slowly in the Tenderloin if they don't watch it.

Anyway, cheers. Cheers, David. Cheers, poor Hashbury. Poor
 Golden Gate Park. Cheers, 1960s. You don't need the Tenderloin. Your wilt
 is obvious.

She drank long & hard & thoroughly of her drink. Delicious. Mother
 Nature gives Owsley the old handjob.

Someone in her building is playing *Sargeant Pepper* again. Poor
 Lennon. He drinks glass after glass of Owsley too. Hold the OJ.

But what about it? Secret covenant among men trees & godds?
 Eleusinian prophecies? Secret joy amongst these times? Within's within?
 What? Really? Orpheus & Eurydice? The collapse of space & time?

She relaxes onto her bed.

You can learn how to be you in time. Love is all you need.

And me? My role in this? I know I know too much. I don't know
 enough.

It's easy. All you need is love. Love. Love. Love is all you need. All
 you need. All you need. All you need.

She didn't make it difficult to spy on her. No shades. Lying there in
 her bed, the sun running down her body in happy washes. Her breasts
 large and taut. Jeez. Look at that pussy. Ruby furred triangle. Even just her
 thighs. Any part of her. I almost feel guilty jerking my cock til it spills,
 reluctantly. I know. I do know. You want to be inside her, Captain. Yes I
 agree.

But I wouldn't begin to know how to describe my loneliness to her.
 And why would she care? And why would that make her hot for me? I'm
 lonely. I'm horny. I watch you you lying there in your apartment, naked,
 no shades, & I jack off unhappily.

Take me with you. Your eyes are closed. You are dreaming. Take
 me with you. I know it's better than here. Freaks. Addicts.

She's beautiful. She's unhappy too. Where does she go, just lying
 there?

"Suzanne told me about the Covenant. It had to do with the trees.
 & Greek godds too, I think. She said acid isn't the place you go for it's just
 the cosmic sled that gets you near. She wasn't too sure. She told me she
 kept dreaming about Paris & trapezes. Someone named Marie. & when
 she first tripped, she'd been taken into the future. She told me there was a
 paradise of colors & music she'd been in. She'd start crying because she
 didn't know how to make it come back. She found out about the

covenant by accident while she was trying to get back to the colors & music."

"Davey, is that what we're trying to do? To get there?"

"Maybe he just wants to find his Suzanne again."

"Maybe she's there."

David Time watched the trees feasting on afternoon sunlight. It was beautiful.

Rich Americus in the underworld. Cutting through its indifference with his guitar. Music here was water, food, torchlight. This place was helpless in the face of his music. Still, no Franny.

Coming soon: Noisy Children, live in Hell. A benefit. In the name of Love.

To be continued in *Cenacle* | 55 | April 2005





Judih Haggai



Watching You Cling

mouth sucking cling
wrapped around her ghost
watching you hang on
i sing a fading song

words burst over symbols
lake overflows with time
it's over, seasons turn
the melody of yesterday

once it rained broccoli salad
gathered in the morning dew
sprouts of chickory
garnished your breakfast tray

but now that days have walked away
the harvest is poor,
the noise of tomorrow crashes through
as you aimlessly sift through time

In My Last Life

as an eagle
in my last life
i watched the details
of probe and swoop

i called to you
as miles melted into clouds
i turned to the flutter of wings

my heart knew one intent
as a unit of strength
a protector of the weak

it was done, i did all
as requested, as fulfilled
impeccable action

my last life was dedicated
and sanctified, as native
lore upheld
as blessed a life as eagles share
as above, so below
i fell into infinity
and reappeared as this

my last life
swirls within
as i direct my gaze to you

Bitching Lessons

Teach me how to exhale poison
 flush out horrific veins
 factory of venom
 generating helem (shock)
 too much, too long
 visions burst with arm, leg overtures
 louder than decibels can take
 i quake beneath the faultline
 shaking with rage

i, a cotton ball of purity
 absorb the rattler's bite
 swallowing so others might be spared
 till one day hits us all
 smacks us in the artery
 of trust
 writhing where it hurts
 God!
 when was it we believed?

Was Ancient Sumeria to blame
 Should Atlantis have submerged us all?
 As i chew my tail
 and moult my innocence
 teach me to spit out the crimes
 i've eaten for three hundred years

this belly's due for birth
 and the DNA ain't easy

Pain Soup and Serenade

Ladle lazy to stir
pain soup and serenade
hope and struggle marinade
pour on hot steamed days

Slow line, trays in hand
dishing out the evening news
move on, get it while it lasts
herbal tidbits in fresh reversal

People, eat your fill
There's more, don't you know it,
digestible bites, bottomless dish
'Fragranced tomorrows,' whispers dessert

Inevitable Halva Sneaks Between Pages

As notion of poetry slams out
room shaken time warp
lost snapshots of combusted sighs
an inevitable craving for halva
sneaks between pages
offers relief to barefoot nostalgia

Once upon a sunset in Greece
began the ode better left alone

And dylan strums bouzouki
grunting a guttural carnation
re-view, re-wind, re-turn

Papyrus and stylus signal i'm dreaming
How cruel to be reminded
as halva sneaks between pages
and the crush of hope sings in the night

Q Inspired Truth

It's a sad day
at saturday matinee
when boys change to dogs
and rings get left behind
and the popcorn disappears
before the final intermission

A stinking bad day
at bible class for sinners
when teacher spits blood
and kids flirt with pentangles
dating satan and slicing angels
camouflaged by Moses jokes

A rip-off hell-hole day
as dreams revolve round escape
when nights see the poison
and demons stir gangrened toes
snickering no return
yet back they come tonight

Raymond Soulard, Jr.



Secret Joy Amongst These Times: The History of Scriptor Press, 1995 to the Present

*"Think for yourself
& question authority"*
—Dr. Timothy Leary

Chapter Eight

continued from
The Cenacle / 51-52 / December 2004

Some years rise up higher than others in one's life, & a few never diminish, their effects trail on & out, wider & stranger, sire consequences from deep, hard roots. My year 2001 ruptured me like 1977 when my kin took us from my childhood home; 1981 when I finally, though failingly, breached the world of romantic love; 1992 when I left home state Connecticut for Boston; & 1997 when I first experienced LSD shatteringly, permanently. Little else smacked as hard as 2001. Much of what I'd known of stability would be going or gone by year's end. Job. Jellicle Guild. I believe that the burning true things within me remained in tact but I cannot deny that the passing of time & roll of circumstances alter contour when not awling, re-coloring. What's here to say is that Scriptor Press, always helplessly aligned to the runs high & low of my current fate, began a decline in mid-2001 from which it is still finding its way back or, rather, onward. I look back & the trail is obvious, it leads here, & hereon. Actively mulling this great ugly year is a way toward more departing the larger part of its shadow.

The year began exciting when Allston-Brighton Free Radio began webcasting (<http://www.abfreeradio.org>). Suddenly my obscure radio show was accessible to people with 'net connections around the world. What has since become fairly common was at that time still novel. Sunday afternoons I would take two trains from Malden down to Boston to do my two-hour (later three) broadcast. Those afternoons stay with me in fondest memory: the hurry to get myself & notebooks & reading matter & music to the first train, the quick stop between trains at HMV Records in downtown Boston for something new to play on air. Moby. Waterboys. Tragically Hip.

Black Crowes. The stop for fast food then hurry to the station, a cluttered but high tech place. ABFR leader Steve Provizer got the station on the AM airwaves, then on the 'net, including a video stream. Libraries donated LPs enough to fill a number of bookcases. DJs had phonographs, CD players, cassette-decks, DAT tape player, & MP3 programs to work with, all huddled around a mic, headphones, vast old soundboard.

I played rock albums old & new, & at least once a show mixed all sorts of pieces together into a sonic collage—comedy records, typing instruction albums, bad pop music speeded up, bird songs—& read from books on psychedelics, such as Terence McKenna's fantastic *Food of the Gods*. I read from my trip-influenced poetry & prose too. On the long trek home I would listen to the cassettes I'd recorded of the program. Fun. Mattered. My friends at the SpiritPlants online community became regular listeners, anticipated these broadcasts.

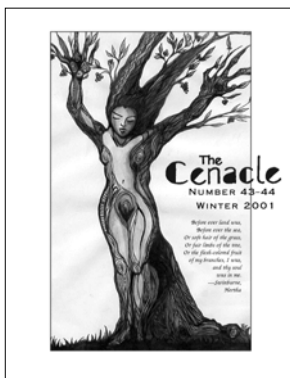
Then in late winter my romance with Erika Del Fabbro ended, inevitably I suppose. Too much to maintain a Boston-Montreal connection with my live visits only rarely punctuating phone calls & online chatter. What draws me to women I pursue is a certain kind of youthful fierceness, eros, longing, sadness. A night I keep from then involved her dim-lit Montreal bedroom, incense, candles, listening to some dark modern rock, a moment of free union. But she had her path to walk. I was sad, drank hard a few nights in Boston bars, wrote some poems at them & at a few coffeehouses. The woman left again, the Art stayed, consoled, renewed, pushed me along. Another romance later came & went too, Leni Russell in Orlando. Blonde, broken Leni. My poetry project *6 x 36 Nocturnes*, fed on these intense crossings, never let me stop, some promise glowed in the secretmost shivers of my dreams. A muse, a beloved, a wife. Not Erika. Not Leni. Not the dozens & decades of others. Not yet.

Women came, looked, liked, tired, moved away & gone. Shucked, again, I continued my work & primarily that meant *Cenacles*. The three issues published in 2001 were the last of their kind in several ways: the Jellicle Literary Guild, genesis & often inspiration for the periodical, ended its existence in December; the people who comprised the *Cenacle's* regular contributors scattered, some by circumstance, some by conflict; & these were the last issues published while I still lived in metro Boston. All these aspects rooted the 1995-2001 *Cenacles* in a certain place among select people. From then until now at least (mid-autumn 2004), this publication has struggled to skein together a new & successful context. Remembering this past year in these pages is perhaps to learn greater what it was & meant, & renew hope for . . . renewal itself.

The days then weeks have passed in bringing this chapter into being. I allowed myself through the mental crevasses behind which my 2001 remains, buzzes with voices, glows with events small & enormous. A few pages at its best offers what must be recounted, what will insist on presence.

Cenacle 43-44 Winter 2001 features a tree nymph as cover illustration by Patty Kisluk; Barbara Brannon's cover design adds lines from the poet Swinburne: "Before every land was,/Before ever the sea,/Or soft fine hair of the grass,/Or fair limbs of the tree,/Or the flesh-colored fruits,/of

my branches, I was/and thy soul/was in me." Ric Amante's shimmying visceral poetry opens the issue's pages with his call to "Leap, serve, & kneel while you can." Brannon's "Traveler's Sketchbook: Europe" is lovely littered with images of cathedrals & statuary. My especial favorite is her depiction of Rodin's "The Kiss" at the Tate Modern in England (this image was later used on the cover of *Scriptor Press Sampler #3/2001 Annual*). I think Joe Ciccone as soul & poet sums up to a sharp degree by quoting his poem "Skeleton Key": "no I made and tacked my own prize to the wall . . . some stood for heroism, others had something to do with beauty . . ." Yet another poet in this issue's multiple songster assault was Mark Shorette: "we dwell in unspoken times/you and i/the pause between breath and command/holds within its potent finitude/you as all/me as atom/within that all."



Cenacle 43-44's psychedelics essay was an excerpt from *LSD Psychotherapy* by Dr. Stanislov Grof. Grof, a well-regarded thinker in this field of research, writes that "LSD is a unique and powerful tool for the exploration of the human mind and human nature. Psychedelic experiences mediate access to deep realms of the psyche that have not yet been discovered and acknowledged by mainstream psychology and psychiatry." Grof's high level of speculative and experiential thinking places him in a long line of such minds: Hofmann, Osmond, Lilly, McKenna, Shulgin a few better-known among

this band.

To read *The Cenacle* is to find the majority of its pages written by mine own hand. "From Soulard's Notebooks" contains a March 2001 letter to a girl I cared much for, Leni Russell, mentioned above. A traveling epistle, wiggling thumbs down at the then-current movie *Traffic* & up to Phish's recent album *Farmhouse*. A tripping letter, keeping a bit of a happily remembered night in Boston. Trains. Mall. Movie theatre. IMAX.

6 x 36 *Nocturnes*, second series, appeared, its poems travelling around Boston & to Burning Man, love poems to Leni & Erika successively. Always trolling for something deeper:

*All is maya. Illusion. Art. Play. Perhaps.
Everything ends, & a beat, & all begins again,
miracle. To play one true note. To learn
how. Far now from burbling sunshine
& nowhere near wet willing clarity. All alone.
All suffering. Yes. Everything ends, & a
beat, & all begins again, miracle.*

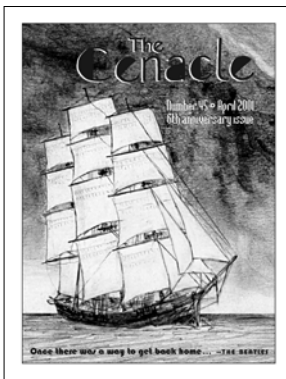
The *Nocturnes* chase after many things: the lure of pink cheeks; what strange words to be found in the night's hard rhythms & high melodies; a desire to evaporate at least for moments into deepest lingual conjurings.

"Pursuit" continued the serialization of the *Cement Park* stories. There is a passage in it remains potentially odd. A character with my name

writing the story conjures a scene which crosses Luna T's Cafe, my walk home at that time, & a pro football game on TV between the Dallas Cowboys & their arch-rival Washington Redskins:

"and i am screaming in the ZombieDownTown night air and Taxi Time cabs swerve around me because I am in the middle of Canal Street and fat beautiful tit of a full moon rubs my head and i am screaming and there are motes everywhere all visible moving in packs of particles moving in fields of waves ball flying through the air and the playmaker crosses the expanse of the sky and catches the football and catches the fat tit full moon 'and the Cowboys are 1st down and 10 on the Washington 19!'"

The narrative scrambles & fragments & gathers itself into new shapes again & again, surveying a musician's sickness—a sort of psychedelic ennui—and how the writer-character absorbs & shares & helps toward dissolving it (tis fitting that the issue's back cover depicts the chemical structure of LSD-25—and an apt quotation from Robert Heinlein: "Truth is more fantastic than reality.").



Cenacle 45 April 2001 is as near to the crescendo's still point of a time lost. I turned 37 that month—in "From Soulard's Notebooks" I write: "37 daunts me somehow—to ascribe any meaning to an age is silly, of course—but people do—birthday seems to involve both beginning & conclusion"—& *The Cenacle* published its sixth anniversary issue. I'd had over a year of stability, income, home, vocation all ongoing. Everything changes, is all. I look back & wonder what if any different act could have lessened pending hurt without taking what good came too. Maybe none. Maybe that's how it is.

Another strong issue, my friends contributing a rangey variety of work. Both Joe Ciccone & Ric Amante offered further righteous poetry, & Gerry Dillon & Barbara Brannon each contributed a short fiction. My contributions were the usual—notebook excerpt, fiction, & *Nocturnes*—plus a new feature, one still running as of this writing. This was a serialization of my Emerson College Master's Degree thesis: *Secret Joy Amongst These Times: A History of Scriptor Press*. Visual pieces included Ralph H. Emerson's nautical-themed cover art, & a series of photos I took of an abandoned computer monitor lying in fallen leaves in the centuries-old Bell Rock Cemetery near where I lived.

Joe Ciccone's poems bear a hard humor & a merciless lingual groping. His a music that hits & hits again. Regard "New Day":

*We followed trails of circumstance into the woods
Looking for any two things that would fit
We were promised something better than this
We longed for our working-class tragic dawns.*

I never knew how much he really liked words though they spellbound him at times with their vast potent. I wonder what he writes now.

I knew Ric Amante's poetry for nearly a decade, through two of his books, many incarnations of his life. A skeptic of language too:

*Love flows sweet and slow
Through widening spaces
hooks and haunts have lost their power—
words break off
hope is a word
a gentle hum is all I hear.*

I suspect time has only sweetened & deepened his work; life strangely congratulates survivors at some crossing. Maine woods again, & finally? Perhaps for a time. But music & food & warm flesh, books & dance, red pens, these always.

Gerry Dillon's story "Aces and Eights" had first been published years before in a zine called *Across the Universe* which he & I & our friend Jim Gregory had edited. It was revived for the *Cenacle* because I had always much liked his *Non Sequitur* space fiction stories. The *Non Sequitur* was a 22nd-century "indie" merchant ship, piloted by the stories' heroine, Izzy Rosoff. Feisty, smart, brooding, Rosoff's crew was her family, even clan; this story finds them facing a renewed threat from a nightmarishly murderous race of aliens called the Inskarchin. More meaningfully, however, they face their fears about the unknown. What is there to fear in the universe & how does one deal with this fear? The story hosts several debates among its principals, concluding unresolved.

Another story in *Cenacle* 45 was Barbara Brannon's "The Darkroom." A webby lurid tale, it recounts a married artist couple's renovation of an old house in a city slum. The slight plot twists nicely; what it seems more to reach for is an illustration of how human cruelty & greed off rise up in the thrust for power. The story makes clever use of an old Gothic fiction device—the secret panel—to deliver its cruel lesson about the dangers of pursuing material gain.

Donald J. DeGracia's essay "A Short Guide about Psychedelic Drugs for the Explorers of Inner Space" finely elaborates its subject through historical, scientific, & occult lenses. DeGracia argues that psychedelics release kundalini energy whose purpose is to help a person gain enlightenment: "the drug confers changes in the endocrine system of that body that results in the stimulation of the kundalini Unfortunately not much more than this can be said." He concludes thusly:

The watchful and attentive psychedelic user will learn many things about the hidden worlds that we cannot perceive with our physical senses, ranging from things as unbelievable as seeing the cells inside your brain, to seeing atoms and molecules, to readily perceiving abstractions so glorious as to defy your very being, all the way to—dare I say it—seeing God first hand, and allowing God to talk through your mouth.

For all contemporary society's apparent demonizing of LSD, marijuana, & their like, there are nonetheless countless passionate men & women engaging entheogen-space & bringing back with them wild residua & it sometimes seems to me is all that keeps the human whorl from curling lifelessly within its own polluted drone.

The majority of my 6 x 36 *Nocturnes*, third series, were love poems for Erika Del Fabbro, peak to fall:

(viii.) *Our love raves, recedes, raves higher. Beyond full moon & spell, it is a new being arising*

(xxii.) *Tonight I fail to subside. You fail to let go. We unriddle the city from its unloving existence. We breach the why & its pain. Love between us a waking from denial.*

(xxviii.) *I wish you love & content. Not happiness, not yet. Not til the spring lands & the geese arrive home.*

The remaining poems (save the last) were new ones for Leni Russell:

(xxxv.) *She carries her basket of stars through the night One perceives her as hungry but satiating laughter. Servants assembling round the righteous.*

Then the last—"For Someone. Anyone."—sad & melodic:

(xxxvi.) *Tonight the release from constrictions & liberty. I don't know who I am. I don't know what to expect. Love has unbraided tonight, guided by glimmers of erotic full moon, trembles & tendrils, a rhythm flowing unto tonight, this teardrop pool.*

Whatever one may think of cyberspace romance, it is my view inarguably that quite often feelings real & profound occur & entwine. Art rises from intensity so great it leaps onto page, canvas, from instrument, clay—I so dearly wished for a beloved—it obsessed my Art which obsessed my waking hours. The year still hid its greatest potent, however.

Cenacle 45's Americus tale "Boxes Redux (Immutable Phalanx)" pursued similar passions, lingual fireworks filled its skies:

All he wants to do is load the stage with his musical artillery,
load & fire, load & fire, load, load, fire, fire, dance, jump, immolate,
love inside the box, vibrate the box til love spills beyond the box,
box of sound, box of love

I'd become one with my fiction, mixing in bits of my life's geography, letters, mixing & mixing, til essentially there were none but symbolic borders between material & imaginary places & creatures.

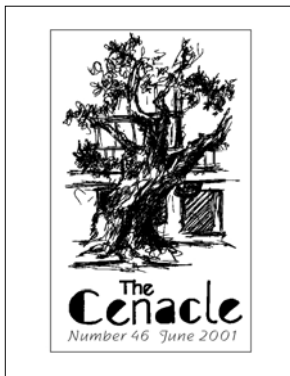
Chapter one of this history appeared in *Cenacle* 45. This chapter & the several to appear serially thereafter comprised my Master's thesis at Emerson College in Boston, Massachusetts, published in December 1999. Eventually chapters appeared whose scope ranged beyond that of the thesis.

My job at Harvard Business School Publishing ended pretty suddenly. My website journal of 5/15/2001 notes:

i got some bad news yesterday...harvard gave me two weeks' notice...fuck them hard...not because i deserve to be let go but because of convoluted bureaucratic conflicts...one department against another...and it's only me who really suffers...ahh well...jobhunting now...readying for the hopes and despairs to come...

I was burnt out from a job going nowhere, an unfriendly corporate environment, a dwindling number of social connections. I went on unemployment & worked on *Cenacle* 46 June 2001.

This issue & the June meeting of the Jellicle Literary Guild at which it debuted where the last remain in a way of life. I'm grateful at least this sheaf of pages exists to remember that time by. Otherwise it haunts by voices & fragments, more useless than not.



More deeply speaking, *Cenacle* 46 is the last issue to document the present tense art of its long-time contributors, all connected through the Jellicle Literary Guild, at which in 1995 the periodical was first announced & later debuted. *Cenacle*, "group of artists," this departed after June 2001. I write of this issue nested in an emotional tumult of memories, what was, what next, what thereafter. I remember with my heart even as my pen insists on its own press for clarity, its particular music.

Barbara Brannon's tree sketch is the issue's front cover, of course, her art fueled so many issues (this one happily jointly fueled by Patty Kisluk's sketches as well), & within her travel journal describes & depicts a winter sojourn in Key West. Beach, cafe, literary birth places, & this passage set in a bookstore:

Toward dusk, showered and rested, we drop in at Blue Heron Books for a signing by Anne Beattie. The author is cordial enough, ensconced in her throne at the back of the store and surrounded by all her Keys cronies, but does little to encourage discussions with tourist drop-ins. After exchanging a few words of greeting with the author and the bookstore owners, we're outta there. Too pompous for our blood.

Her casual illustrations of lighthouses & fruit trees fit the piece's tale-telling mood.

Gerry Dillon's "The Haunting of Yusif," is a brief myth of ghosts & revenge. It moves with quick pace, & twists cleanly at the conclusion. Dillon's storytelling, his musical prose, it is his own, much more than he ever realized. I hope one day he releases to its full potential.

More novel to *Cenacle's* pages is Ralph H. Emerson's "The Lady and the Tree (L & T)," an essay on the way certain sounds often signify certain kinds of things:

Where L's imagery is complex and extensive, T's is very simple L is female, T is male Just like people, the letters of the alphabet have personalities and roles and reputations. Their qualities are qualities that exist within us, and we have created our languages to give them voices. Voices they have now, and they greet us every day.

Emerson's interest in phonesthemes has run years, a deep & long study of sound & sense. He read this & similar essays to great enthusiasm at Jellicle Guild meetings, & published them in linguistic journals of note. In writing of language's quirks, his voice is confident & good-humored. I am reminded of William Safire's old language columns in the *Sunday New York Times*.

One last poem by Joe Ciccone to appear in *The Cenacle*, "Leaving Las Vegas." This surrealist travelogue concludes: "i summon a ride on the last neon locomotive,/and sail back into the true breech"—& I suppose he has; I last saw him in the spring of 2002, during a disastrous visit with him & his girlfriend in Vermont. I still make & distribute *North of Jersey*. I still remember nights with him high on Art, acid, brotherhood. I think he was moving deeper into folksinging, away from the crazed poems he chased among for so long. Perhaps he married that girl. Perhaps he's happy. If he remembers our best days, so be it. They were damned good.

Ric Amante's poems splayed open things—like flowers & trees & house flies—for what succulent mysteries their within might reveal: the poppy "proclaiming a life/more vivid than mad"; the forsythia's "burst of resurrection"; a solitary oak's "current of being/blazing within." Life too rich for complete grasp, death near & not quite unfriendly, poems like these convince me anew that this man deserved much more acclaim than he ever received.

Mark Shorette's essay "Henry David Thoreau: A Man of the American Counterculture" was one I commissioned him to write. His proposition that Thoreau was the "original man" of the American counterculture concludes soundly: "I will not be but who I am. For I do hear different music." I miss my old friend Mark, his wit, his great heart, his sharp unrepentant mind, his wild lingual music. He lives on in lesser form now; perhaps simple persistence in living itself will bring him again to places worth his great soul.

Jim Burke III's letter "State of the World, Part One" is contemporary intelligent rant. He writes: "Everything around us is made up of vibrations,

even inanimate objects. The speed of these vibrations determine the density of the physical matter in question. Also, the degree of consciousness can alter the speed of molecular vibrations at any given moment. The truth can be revealed when these vibrations are slowed down and/or interrupted. This can be done through meditation or the use of psychedelic substances, such as LSD. But a society turned on to this type of spiritual self-guidance would be a culture turned off to Wall Street"—a succinct tell of his philosophically-based assessment of the world & its woes.

The essay on psychedelics I chose to include was Dale R. Godwin's "Confessions of an Amerikan LSD Eater," written in 1991 while Godwin was incarcerated in a New York maximum security prison. He writes most beautifully that "under the spell of these elixirs of light, I was filled with a sudden, overwhelming reawakening of the quality of consciousness that I remembered experiencing as a young child A transcendental understanding flowered into ecstasy." His essay damns the government & other forces of repression in society, such as the mainstream media. A great cry, one worth joining & echoing.

Finally, my own work. Aside from the opening letter, & Chapter Two of this history, there was poetry & fiction. *6 x 36 Nocturnes*, fourth series, runs through a period when no woman loved me & my life felt hung up nowhere. Erika Del Fabbro gone, Leni Russell going, my job gone, my friends gone, I wrote on for my life. A single poem, "All glory passeth," rises above the others, its composition came over a long spring night acidtripping Boston, into the neon-lit alcove of a coffeehouse there, & I felt that night like pure, raw conduit for what flowed through me, felt it crazy as I sat in an old armchair & scribbled crazy:

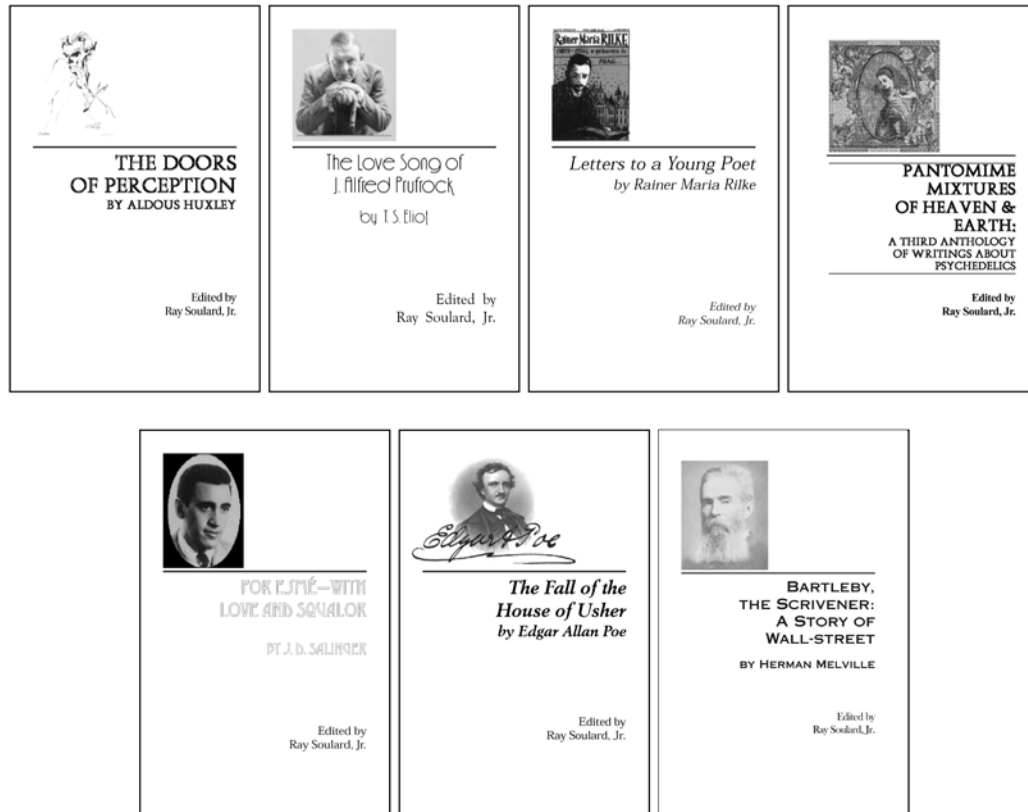
*power raised, again, tonight, no answers,
no puzzles, cherry blossoms, no walls,
spit in your hand & be ready to clobber
cosmos or facemask, the blood to equal,
to better one's dreams*

Writing out these words here reminds me anew how being alive then felt: crazy but good, desperate & sweet. At best, it always feels like that to me.

"Boxes Redux (Immutable Phalanx)" was concluded in this issue. I page randomly through it & find: "I'm beaten, OK? I've been tripping on acid since this morning, every train stop I've been at, a lot of them, I've sat on benches, lost, but writing. I went to a park and looked up at a phalanx of trees." For all the distance I feel from yesteryear's people & places, my own Art is ever near & familiar. It's in me, old, new, & pending. What really stranges me out about this story is that within its pages I couple with 17-year-old Rebecca Dorothy Americus, love her too much to concede to any possible consequences. I want what I want—desire triggers its own laws, I've written. Or, as Woody Allen put it, the artist creates his own moral universe. That story, written in 1998, forecast events about to befall.

Her name was Lisa Marie Zent, & I met her on July 14, 2001, a month after she turned 17. She would weave through my life actively for three years & by effect perpetually. I do not know where she is tonight nor do I wish to know. I wish her good health, & perhaps someday a painful clarity regarding how much she hurt me, as much as she had been hurt by others in her youth.

We met online & within weeks were phoning daily. I was collecting unemployment checks, alone in an ugly little town north of Boston, Ciccone gone, Amante still around but by the summer of 2001 we rarely spoke. An ugly drunken episode in June that year after a poetry reading we three put on effectively ended our friendship. I was lonely & ever chasing for a young potent muse. Lisa was this; living in Portland, Oregon, broken home, upbringing ravaged by sexual violence. We consumed each other for months. My writing flared higher & wilder, poems for her, it was unreasonable & unrealizable & yet this romance strode on & would not cease. Took years to die the last of it.



Burning Man took the rest of my energy, work, focus, money. I determined to go & what money I didn't spend on rent & bills, & long-distance phone cards to call Lisa, I spent on readying for my third annual trip to Black Rock City, Nevada. No Borders Bookstore this year featured: Aldous Huxley's seminal essay on mescaline, *Doors of Perception*; T. S. Eliot's early important poem *Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*; Rainer Maria Rilke's profoundly influential *Letters to a Young Poet*; J. D. Salinger's

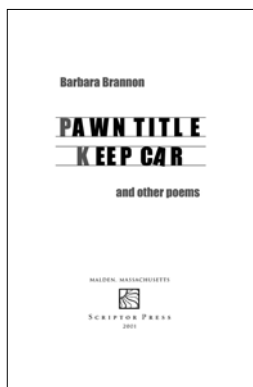
beautiful & cryptic fiction “For Esmé—With Love and Squalor”; Edgar Allen Poe’s classic story “Fall of the House of Usher”; Herman Melville’s genius tale “Bartleby the Scrivener”; & a third anthology of writings on psychedelics, *Pantomime Mixtures of Heaven & Earth*. Seven books in all to bring the series to eighteen total & hereon to publish six a year. More meaningful than this, however, the adding to the series of works profoundly important to me. Rilke’s letters taught me how to write, how to think. Salinger’s story showed me the great raw potency of storytelling. Huxley’s essay arches over societal prejudices about psychedelics, about the unlimited depths of the world & the human, to reveal strange goodness & clutching beauty at the heart of creation. These three among a dear group of works were what I carried with me to the festival & its many highs & lows. The nights wandering the desert ragged & high & weirdly happy.

I returned from the festival to Boston’s Logan International Airport on September 4, 2001—a week before the planes that reportedly carried 9/11’s hijackers left this same airport. It has been said that the attacks on New York’s World Trade Center twin towers, along with the occurrences in Pennsylvania & Washington D.C. changed the world forever. It seems more pointed to say that the American government’s response to the day’s horrors determined the nature of this change. The worst impulses of the American psyche—bullying superiority, rabid xenophobia, mindless hunger for conformity—roared to the surface & began a clumsy, bloody rule of men still going on as of this writing. Perpetual war, unceasing fear, omni-directed rage & paranoia. The square jaw, upraised fist, & cold eye king this land & would so the world over if the world was welcomed to join along. It is not: the American Empire of George W. Bush will lord above all & one day fall through nobody’s saving grasp.

About the same time, *The ElectroLounge* fell through the bottom of cyberspace when its host server of three years, TheGlobe.com, suddenly went under. I saved nearly all of its files, thanks to heeding Erika Del Fabbro’s old warning to back them up on my computer, & migrated to Yahoo!’s Geocities server (<http://www.geocities.com/scriptorpress>). As the cry in cyberspace quickly became one of resistance to Bush’s warlord vow to vengeance, *ElectroLounge* joined in, & I posted long anti-war screeds there, & links to many like-minded sites. This effort blossomed into an influence felt at large by American society, & continues today.

The only Scriptor Press publication additional to the 7 Burning Man Book titles appeared in December 2001, at the final Jellicle Guild meeting. This was Barbara Brannon’s book of poetry—*Pawn Title, Keep Car*—a volume long anticipated by the two of us. Many nights in the fall of 2001 I worked with sheaves of her poetry, late hours at the town’s only all-night coffeeshop, to hew her best works into a good tome.

Brannon’s book comprises the best of her work from several years’ effort. Her voice never blows up wildly, follows its hue along steadily, aware of poetic conventions & acknowledging them for the most part.



It is the poem "Blind Gator" where Brannon passes some invisible mark from pleasant, intelligent rhythm & melody to hard passion & true music:

*When they take the shot they are quick
Mark dead aim, humane, release
the trigger swiftly,
hit.
They are right:
I had forgotten how sight impairs.
I stare, see light as darkness pales
and scales fall like stars
from my eyes.*

The Jellicle Guild had been averaging 8 meetings a year for many years but slowly its membership dwindled to a few; most meetings it was me, Burke, Shorette, Dillon. Some not even that many. As my sight turned from disappointing & lonely Boston to the West's promise, I found the Guild's diminishment harder to abide. December 29, 2001 I called the last meeting. The venue we'd always met at, Roma Restaurant, New Britain, CT, was under new ownership whose aim was to transform it from a sleepy neighborhood bar to a rocking sports joint. Our brown-walled back room was gone. Our better days with more voices joining in were gone. Those who attended made a symbolic stop at Roma's to say goodbye to the old days. It was the last time most of us went there or saw each other. Thirteen years, 104 meetings, & it was over. A wish to do it again somehow falls before questions of who & where & how. Still, it was a good group & mattered. Matters still.

It's taken weeks to describe this year in the life of my press, & little doubt important things too-briefly summed. Scriptor Press had survived it, produced some work to show. Yet I was jobless, isolated, & had not made a *Cenacle* in six months. My energies after Burning Man turned nearly all to my long-distance romance, its daily upkeep. What I retain from then of good meaning are poems, & memories of late nights tripping & writing & walking the streets of my odd town. I did all I could to live somewhat with pride, yet now I see the waste of days. My job collapse was part of a country's collapse. Things were bad everywhere, & bound for worse.

Looking back now I can wish I had withdrawn from the girl & put balls to the wall getting work. But the poems got made, life had its beautiful glints, because I did what I did. I faced 2002 uncertainly, no clue the waves about to fall.

To be continued in *Cenacle* | 55 | April 2005

Timothy Leary, Gary Snyder,
Alan Watts, & Allen Ginsberg



The Houseboat Summit: February, 1967, Sausalito, California

(Taken from *The Oracle* no. 7)

Part Two: To Drop Out or Not

Leary: Yes, I think he should drop out. And I want to be absolutely clear on that. NOBODY wants to listen to that simple, two-syllable phrase. It gets jargled and jumbled, and I mean it...Now, everyone has to decide how he drops out and when, and he has to time it gracefully, but that's the goal.

Snyder: We understand that...

Leary: Well, Allen didn't. And Allen, I want to tell you the people in Berkeley that ask you what I mean, I mean ABSOLUTELY have nothing to do with the university, and start planning step by step how you can detect...

Ginsberg: Of course, that's where the big argument is, over the NON-STUDENTS. The guys that dropped out are not involved, and their problem is what kind of communities they organize.

Leary: Now, I can foresee that you might work for Sears & Roebuck for six months to get enough money to go to India. But that's part of your drop out. And what I'm doing today, Allen, is part of my drop out. I've got responsibilities, contracts..and I don't think that anyone should violate contracts with people that they love...Contract with the university—ha! Fine—quit tomorrow. Therefore, I have to detach myself slowly. When I was in India two years ago...

Ginsberg: India...but look...you know the university is personal relationships also. They're in contact with persons. They can't reflect those persons, necessarily...There might be a Bodhisattva among those persons.

Snyder: ...As Tim says, you can gracefully drop out...

Leary: Aesthetically...

Snyder: ...at one time or another, which I take to mean...

Ginsberg: I was teaching at Berkeley last week—what do you mean 'drop out?' (laughs)

Leary: You've got to do your yoga as a college professor...it's part of the thing you're gonna have to go through, and after you do that then (laughs) you shudder, and run to the door.



SAGES IN THE MOUNTAINS

Watts: Surely the fact of the matter is that you can do this on a small scale, as an individual, where just a few people are doing this...as they always have done. There have always been a kind of elite minority who dropped out—who were the sages in the mountains. But now we are in a position where the conversations that you and I have go to millions, and people are asking this sort of question.

Let's suppose that everybody in San Francisco decided to take the six o'clock train from the Third Street Station to Palo Alto...See? We know there's no chance of their doing so. And therefore this catastrophe doesn't happen.

Leary: That's exactly what I say to people who say, "Well, suppose everybody dropped out?" Ridiculous!

Watts: Yeah, supposing everyone dropped out...Of course they're not going to.

Leary: Suppose everyone took LSD tonight (laughs) —Great!

THE LEISURE SOCIETY: PUZZLES AND PARADOXES

Watts: The thing is this: what we are facing, what's going to happen is this...if we do not encounter the final political catastrophe of atomic war, biological warfare and wipe the whole thing out, we're going to have a huge leisure society—where they're going to reverse taxation and PAY people for the work that the machines do for them. Because there's no other solution to it.

In other words, if the manufacturer is going to be able to sell his products, the people gotta have money to pay for the products. All those people have been put out of work by the machines the manufacturer is using. Therefore, the people have got to be paid by the government—CREDIT of some kind, so they can buy what the machines produces—then the thing will go on.

So this means that thousands and thousands of people are going to be loafing around, with nothing at all to do. A few people who are maniacs for work will go on...

Leary: I think what you're defining, Alan, is...

Watts: But that's the kind of situation we're moving into. IF we survive at all.

Leary: Well, there's another possibility. And, I think you're defining two possible new species. Let's face it, the evolution of mankind is not over.

Watts: No!

Leary: Just as there are many kinds of primates: baboons and chimpanzees and so forth. In a few thousand years we'll look back and see that from—what we call man—there may be two or more species developing.

There's no question that one species, which could and probably will develop, is this anthill. It's run like a beehive with queens—or kings—(laughs) and it'll all be television and now, of course, in that, sexuality will become very promiscuous and almost impersonal. Because, in an anthill,

it always turns out that way.

BUT you're gonna have another species who will inevitably survive, and that will be the tribal people, who don't have to worry about leisure because when you drop out then the real playwork begins. Because then you have to, as Gary says, learn how to take care of yourself and your loved ones on this...

Snyder: I don't think that you're right about that anthill thing at all though. That's a very negative view of human nature. I don't think it's accurate.

Leary: It's no longer even human nature. We won't call them human anymore. These people—

HUMAN BEINGS WANT REALITY

Snyder: C'mon, Tim, they're humans and they're gonna be here. You're talking a drama here. You're talking about—you know—anthropological realities. The anthropological reality is that human beings, in their nature, want to be in touch with what is real in themselves and in the universe.

For example, the longshoremen with their automation contract in San Francisco...a certain number of them have been laid off for the rest of their lives with full pay, and some of them have been laid off already for five years—with full pay—by their contract.

Now my brother-in-law is a longshoreman, and he's been telling me about what's happening to these guys. Most of them are pretty illiterate, a large portion of them are Negroes. The first thing they all did was get boats and drive around San Francisco Bay...because they have all this leisure.

Then a lot of them got tired driving around boats that were just like cars, and they started sailing. Then a few of them started making their own sailboats. They move into and respond to the possibility of challenge.

Things become simpler and more complex and more challenging for them. The same is true of hunting. Some guy says "I want to go hunting and fishing all the time, when I have my leisure...but God!" So he goes hunting all the time. Then he says, "I want to do this in a more interesting way." So he takes up bow hunting...Then the next step is—and this has happened—he says, "I want to try making my own arrowheads." And he learns how to flake his own arrowheads out.

Now, human beings want reality. That's, I think, part of human nature. And television and drinking beer and watching television is what the working man laid off does for the first two weeks.

But then in the third week he begins to get bored, and in the fourth week he wants to do something with his body and his mind and his senses.

Leary: But if he's still being paid by the Establishment, then you have someone who's going back to childhood. Like, he's making arrows that he really doesn't need...

Snyder: May I speak my vision about this?

Leary: I object to this very much. I want him out there really fighting—not fighting, but working—for his family, not chipping.

Snyder: Well, this is a transitional thing, too...It's too transitional.

Ginsberg: This leads to violence because it divides everybody up into

separate...

Snyder: Oh, he was talking poetry.

Leary: No, I'm not! I want to be clear about this. Nobody wants to listen to this. We are doing this already...

Snyder: No, but the difference is, the children of the ants are all going to be tribal people. That's the way it's going to work. We're going to get the kids, and it's going to take about three generations.

THE CHANGE

And in the meantime, the family system will change, and when the family system changes the economy will change...and in the meantime, a number of spiritual insights are going to change the minds of the technologists and the scientists themselves, and technology will change. There will be a diffused and decentralized technology...as I see it...

Watts: Well, go on...Are you saying now what you said was your vision?

Snyder: Now, what I was going to say was very simply this. I think that automation in the affluent society, plus psychedelics, plus—for the same curious reason—a whole catalytic, spiritual change or bend of mind that seems to be taking place in the west, today especially, is going to result—can result ultimately—in a vast leisure society in which people will voluntarily reduce their number, and because human beings want to do that which is real...simplify their lives.

The whole problem of consumption and marketing is radically altered if a large number of people voluntarily choose to consume less. And people will voluntarily choose to consume less if their interests are turned in any other direction. If what is exciting to them is no longer things but states of mind.

Leary: That's true.

STATES OF MIND

Snyder: Now what is something else... People are not becoming interested in states of mind, and things are not going to substitute for states of mind. So what I visualize is a very complex and sophisticated cybernetic technology surrounded by thick hedges of trees... Somewhere, say around Chicago. And the rest of the nation a buffalo pasture...

Leary: That's very close to what I think.

Snyder: ...with a large number of people going around making their own arrowheads because it's fun, but they know better ...(laughter) They know they don't have to make them. (more laughter)

Leary: Now, this seems like our utopian visions are coming closer together. I say that the industry should be underground, and you say it should be in Chicago. This interests me.

Watts: Well, it's the same idea.

Snyder: Well, those who want to be technological engineers will be respected...And the other thing is that you can go out and live close to nature, or you can go back and...

Leary: But you won't be allowed to drive a car outside this technological...

Snyder: You won't want to! That's the difference, baby. It's not that you won't be allowed to, it's that you won't want to. That's where it's got to be at.

CIVILIZED "PAP"

Watts: Because, it's the same thing when we get down to, say, the fundamental question of food. More and more one realizes that the mass produced food is not worth eating, and therefore, in order to delight in things to eat, you go back to the most primitive processes of raising and preparing food. Because that has taste.

And I see that it will be a sort of flip, that as all the possibilities of technology and automation makes it possible for everybody to be assured of having the basic necessities of life...they will then say: "Oh, yes, we have all that, but now in the meantime while we don't have to work, let's go back to making arrowheads and to raising the most AMAZING PLANTS."

Snyder: Yeah...It would be so funny; the thing is that they would all get so good at it that the technology center of Chicago would rust away.
(laughter)

Watts: Right! Right! (laughter)

Leary: That's exactly what's going to happen. The psychedelic drop-outs are going to be having so much fun. They're going to be so much obviously healthier.

Watts: But Tim, do you see any indication among people who at present are really turned on, that they are cultivating this kind of material competence? Now, I haven't seen too much of it yet...

Snyder: Some of those kids at Big Sur have got it.

Watts: Yeah, maybe you're right.

Snyder: They're learning. A few years ago they used to go down to Big Sur and they didn't know how to camp or dig latrines.

TECHNOLOGICAL HANDBOOK

But like what Marine has been telling me lately, is that they're getting very sharp about what to gather that's edible, how to get sea salt, what are the edible plants and the edible seeds, and the revolutionary technological book for this state is A.L. Kroeber's *Handbook of the California Indians*, which tells you what's good to eat and how to prepare it. And also what to use for tampons: milkweed fluff...(laughter) Diapers made of shredded bark...The whole thing is all there.

Leary: Beautiful...

Watts: But the thing is this. I've found so many people who are the turned on type, and the circumstances and surroundings under which they live are just plain cruddy. You would think that people who have seen what you can see with the visions of psychedelics would reflect themselves in forms of life and art that would be like Persian miniatures. Because obviously Persian miniatures and Moorish arabesques are all reflecting the state of mind of people who were turned on. And they are rich and

glorious beyond belief.

Ginsberg: Majestic.

Watts: Majestic! Yeah! Well now, why doesn't it so occur...It is slowly beginning to happen...'Cause I've noticed that, recently, all turned on people are becoming more colorful. They're wearing beads and gorgeous clothes and so and so forth...and it's gradually coming out. Because you remember the old beatnik days when everybody was in blue jeans and ponytails and no lipstick and DRAB—and CRUMMY!

Snyder: What! (laughter)

Watts: Now, something's beginning to happen!

Snyder: Well, it wasn't quite that bad, but we were mostly concerned with not being consumers then...and so we were showing our non-consumerness.

Watts: Yes, I know! The thing is I am using this as a symbol because the poor cons in San Quentin wear blue jeans.

Snyder: The thing is that there are better things in the Goodwill now than there used to be.

Watts: Yes, exactly. (laughter) But the thing is that now I see it beginning to happen. Timothy here, instead of wearing his old—whatever he used to wear—has now got a white tunic on with gold and colorful gimp on it.

Ginsberg: Gimp?

Watts: Yes, and it's very beautiful, and he's wearing a necklace and all that kind of thing, and color is at last coming into the scene.

Snyder: That's going back before the Roundheads, and before Cromwell...

Watts: Yes, it is.

Leary: Let's get practical here, I think we're all concerned about the increasing number of people who are dropping out and wondering where to go from there. No let's come up some practical suggestions which we might hope could unfold in the next few months.

To be concluded in *Cenacle* | 54 | April 2005

Notes On Contributors

Jim Burke III lives in West Hartford, Connecticut where he plays guitar for the Resistance, and smokes kind for the Resistance, and lives his life by a sense of moral urgency and responsibility admirable to those around him who pay mind to such things.

Allen Ginsberg was born in Paterson, New Jersey in 1926 and traveled far and farther in his long years, singing, raising good dust everywhere he went, teaching, listening, writing, a rare man who found all persons rare and lived by the idealism of this thought.

Judih Haggai lives at Kibbutz Nir Oz in Israel where she flows and sings and mothers and wives and swings out the good for all she sees and knows and feels.

Kassandra Kramer lives in Seattle, Washington where she is journeying deeper into herself every day and finding more and more of the good in the world within her, and deciding what next to do :)

Timothy Leary was born in Springfield, Massachusetts in 1920. A man both esteemed and vilified for his role in the psychedelic revolution, history will bear out his efforts serious and clownish both as good, most good.

Gary Snyder was born in 1930 in San Francisco, California and spent his many years with trees, poetry, and human suffering. He attends to all three with equal beauty of soul.

Raymond Soulard, Jr. lives in Seattle, Washington, often with too few or too many ideas why, trying to learn the greater juggle to things, calling the long run worth the effort, plans and schemes, blah blah...hehe...

Alan Watts was born in England in 1915 and wrote much about Zen and psychedelics. A writer of easy kindness and great intelligence, a man whose life offers instruction on the costs and benefits of freethinking.



Turn on...



Tune in...



Burning Man 2004

The Penacle



I have my fears...
But they do not have me...